Ministry of Hosea in the Days of Jeroboam II of Israel and of Uzziah Through Hezekiah of Judah[1]

HOSEA

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. The book of Hosea has as its title the name of the prophet who wrote it. Hosea is the first of the twelve Minor Prophets, so called, not because they are less in importance than the Major Prophets, but because they are shorter in length. Many ancient Hebrew and Christian writers regarded the writings of the Minor Prophets as forming one book. Inasmuch as the period covered by the Minor Prophets was somewhat similar in character to our own in its spirit of materialism, commercialism, and social evils, these books have a definite and important message for us today.

The name Hosea (Heb. *Hosea‘*) is a shortened form of the Heb. *Hosha‘eyah* (Jer. 42:1; 43:2), which means, “Yahweh has saved.”

2. Authorship. Nothing more is known concerning the family history of Hosea than is given in the opening verses of his prophecy. The naming of the prophet’s father, Beeri (Heb. *Be’eri*, “my well”), does not reveal the tribe to which Hosea belonged. We know

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[1]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ho 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

nothing of the happenings of Hosea's latter days, or the place and time of his death. However, internal evidence makes it clear that Hosea belonged to the northern kingdom, Israel, and carried on his ministry there.

3. Historical Setting. The reigns during which Hosea prophesied are dated, according to the tentative chronology used in this commentary (see Vol. II, pp. 77, 131–162), as follows: Uzziah (790–739), Jotham (750–731), Ahaz (735–715), and Hezekiah (729–686), kings of Judah, and Jeroboam II (793–753), king of Israel. Hosea must have begun his ministry well before 753 B.C. and continued actively until some time after 729 B.C.

He lived in the darkest period of the history of the kingdom of Israel, just before the nation was taken captive by Assyria. Since the book of Hosea makes no mention of this event, it is probable that it was written before the final ruin of the northern kingdom. Outwardly, Israel under Jeroboam II was prosperous and successful, more so than in any time since David and Solomon (see on Hosea 2:8). Its northern boundaries were almost as extensive as those under these early kings (see 2 Kings 14:25, 28).

However, this outer glory only revealed the more the inner moral and spiritual declension of the people. Political anarchy and misrule were the order of the day. Kings took the throne after murdering their predecessors, and in turn were themselves assassinated. Shallum slew Zachariah, Menahem slew Shallum, Pekah slew the son of Menahem, Pekahiah; and Hosea, the last king of Israel, slew Pekah. Possibly it is because of this shameful anarchy that followed the reign of Jeroboam II that he alone is mentioned by Hosea, and his successors are omitted (Hosea 1:1; see on chs. 7:5; 8:4), or possibly the prophet went south into Judah after the reign of Jeroboam.

Hosea repeatedly refers to the idolatrous calf worship set up by Jeroboam I (see 1 Kings 12) as a prime cause of Israel's wickedness. This calf worship probably gave entrance later to a cruder and more inhuman worship offered to Baal and Ashtoreth, the shocking abomination of the sacrifice of children and the unspeakable degradation of gross sensuality.

Hosea lived in the time of the harvest of this evil sowing. Creature worship displaced that of the Creator. No commandment of the true God was obeyed. Dishonesty, mutual distrust, deception toward God and man, prevailed. Bloodshed was rife; luxury in every form was stimulated in the prosperous days of Jeroboam II. Perverted justice was common, also oppression of the poor. Adultery was consecrated to religion. All levels of society became debauched, and blasphemy and skepticism marked the royal court. The priests, wholly devoted to idolatry, joined the people in their sinfulness, and added to the corruption that covered the land.

Against this flood of iniquity in the northern kingdom Hosea was called by God to erect the dikes of rebuke, condemnation, and appeal—appeal to the invincible love of God for His erring children. But the appeals of Hosea went unheeded by an apostate people. Unrepentant, unchanged, the wicked nation held to its rebellious course of action, and was carried into the cruel captivity of Assyrian bondage. Hosea bore God's last message to the northern kingdom prior to its fall in 723/722 B.C.

4. Theme. The dominant theme of the book of Hosea is the love of God for His erring children. The experiences through which the prophet passed in his own family life, and the feelings of his own heart toward his faithless wife, gave him a glimpse into the boundless depths of the Father's love for His people.

In the light of this divine love the terrible wickedness of the northern kingdom appears even blacker, and Hosea in no way excuses the people for their conduct. The prophet also paints in darkest hues the dreadful retributions that will fall upon Israel if they persist in their evil ways. These warnings are not threats, but are statements of fact, showing that punishment inevitably follows sin. However, through all his writing Hosea depicts the yearning love of God for His wayward people. The book is filled with appeals to repentance and messages of hope to those who will turn again to their loving Father.

5. Outline.

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CHAPTER 1

1 *Hosea, to shew God's judgment for spiritual whoredom, taketh Gomer*, and 4 *and hath by her Jezreel*, 6 *Lo-ruhamah*, 8 *and Lo-ammi*. 10 *The restoration of Judah and Israel*.

1. The word of the Lord. See on Jer. 46:1. With a directness characteristic of the prophets, Hosea declares that the message he bears is not of human invention but of divine inspiration (see 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21).

2. Take unto thee a wife. Concerning the events here described three views have been held:

a. That they represent merely a dream or a vision, and hence were not actually fulfilled in the personal life of Hosea.
b. That the account is only a parable or an allegory.

c. That the account is a literal, biographical sketch of the personal family life of Hosea.

The principal objection urged against the literal interpretation is that the command to take "a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms" seems inconsistent with the character of God.

However, in the absence of any direct statement or hint that the passage is allegorical or that it describes a vision or dream, the most natural way to understand the passage is to regard it as a literal narrative. Many commentators favor the literal view, although they differ widely in their understanding of the details. Some have sought to justify the command of God to Hosea by observing that whatever God commands is therefore right. Others observe that the narrative by no means establishes that Gomer was of questionable character when Hosea married her, since the phrase "of whoredoms" may simply describe her ancestry, not necessarily her personal character, or may proleptically describe the woman's future status. That she later became unfaithful appears clear (ch. 3:1–3). However, the precise time of her fall is not clearly pointed out. Of the three children born, only of the first, Jezreel, is it said that he was born to "him," that is, to Hosea.

If Gomer was of upright character when Hosea married her, then there can be no question as to a command from God to marry this woman. It was possibly a permissive command (see Num. 13:1, 2; cf. Deut. 1:22; PP 387) to marry someone he already loved.

The narrative has the form of a strictly historical account, and in the absence of any real evidence to the contrary it seems preferable to take it as such.

The land hath committed. The personal family experience of Hosea was made the basis of important religious instruction and appeal.

3. Gomer. Probably meaning "completion." No satisfactory explanation has been found regarding the significance of this name. This adds weight to the belief that Gomer was the historical name of a literal character. The same may be said concerning the name Diblaim.

4. Jezreel. The meaning of the Hebrew name is "God will sow," or "God will scatter." Some have pointed out the play on ideas in the Hebrew name itself. Because anciently seed was scattered in the process of sowing, the word "to scatter" came also to have the meaning "to sow," or "to plant." The first meaning of the name Jezreel applied to the time of Gomer's unfaithfulness, as a result of which Hosea "scattered," or hindered, her, that is, hedged her up and restricted her privileges. Later, when she repented, Hosea "planted" her, that is, he restored her to her former status and privileges (see on ch. 2:22). Also there is a typical Hebrew play on words in the contrast of the word Jezreel with the word Israel: the latter has reference to prevailing with God for salvation (see on Gen. 32:28), the former, as used here, is a reference to being scattered by God unto destruction. The names of the prophet's three children are significant, pointing as they do to God's punishment of His people for their sins.

Avenge. Literally, "visit"; here used in the sense of administering punishment (see on Ps. 8:4;59:5).

Blood of Jezreel. At the command of God, Jehu had exterminated the whole house of Ahab in the city of Jezreel (2 Kings 9:6, 7; 10:17). Why, then, should Jehu's action be avenged? Very likely because his motive in destroying the dynasty of Ahab was sinful. To destroy the house of Ahab fitted into Jehu's selfish desire to obtain the kingdom. God's purpose in exterminating the house of Ahab was to blot out completely the idolatry

so generally provoked by Ahab and Jezreel. Although Jehu brought to an end the worship of Baal, he still retained the worship of Jeroboam's calves (see 2 Kings 10:21–31). This half fulfillment of the divine command revealed a divided heart, and so brought upon Jehu the greater condemnation, since it nullified the divine objective. He placed his own purposes before those of God, and so the sentence was pronounced upon him, "I will avenge." A man may be employed by God to accomplish a divine purpose, and yet be rejected if his heart is not right.

House of Jehu. Jehu's son (Jehoahaz), his grandson (Jehoash or Joash), and his great-grandson (Jeroboam II) followed him on Israel's throne; then Shallum slew the son of Jeroboam II, Zachariah, ending this royal line (2 Kings 15:8–12). Thus was fulfilled both Hosea's prophecy and the previous word of the Lord unto Jehu (see on 2 Kings 10:30).

Cause to cease. This follows because the event that ended the house of Jehu, the assassination of Zachariah, began the period of political confusion that quickly ushered in the downfall of the northern kingdom (see Vol. II, pp. 84, 85). The pronounced secular prosperity of the nation under Jeroboam II was not an evidence of divine favor. The ultimate result of disobedience was the same then as now—destruction.

5. At that day. When the northern kingdom would be destroyed.

Break the bow. That is, destroy the military might of Israel.

Valley of Jezreel. The punishment upon the nation was depicted as taking place in the same region where Jehu slew the family of Ahab (see 2 Kings 9:15–37). For the meaning of the word "Jezreel" see on Hosea 1:4.

6. Bare a daughter. Some have found it significant that the record does not state, bare "him" a child, as was stated concerning Jezreel (see v. 3). This fact has led them to conclude that Lo-ruhamah was not a child of Hosea, but was born as a result of the adultery of Gomer. This view is strengthened if ch. 2 is taken to be the actual experience of the prophet with his wife, Gomer (see on ch. 2:4).

Lo-rohamah. Heb. *Lo'ruchamah*, "not pitied," or "not having received compassion." Paul, referring to the prophecy of Hosea, apparently interprets the phrase as meaning "not beloved" (Rom. 9:25), and Peter, doubtless referring to the same general passage, speaks of a people that "had not obtained mercy" (1 Peter 2:10). The nation of Israel was at the place where a God of love could no longer have compassion upon it (see Gen. 6:3).

Utterly take them away. The LXX reads, "surely set myself in array against them." This is evidently a reference to the soon-coming Assyrian captivity.

7. But I will have mercy. The spiritual condition of the southern kingdom, "the house of Judah," was much better than that of the northern kingdom. Although there was a spiritual decline in Judah, the nation as a whole still held, in some measure, to the worship of God, to the Law, to the Temple services and to the sacrifices that pointed forward to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). This called forth divine compassion upon the southern kingdom in reproachful contrast with that denied the kingdom of Israel.

Will save them. God did save Judah from the fate suffered by Samaria in 723/722; he saved them later from Sennacherib by slaying the 185,000 in the Assyrian camp (2 Kings 19:35, 36; Isa. 37:36, 37).

Will not save them by bow. Judah, though tainted with idolatry, did to a considerable degree maintain its devotion and trust in God rather than in military strength as did Israel. The detailed mention of armed forces here strikingly emphasizes the truth that when God

delivers His people He does not need bow or sword, horses or horsemen, to gain the victory; and that these, when used, cannot save without Him (see Ps. 20:7; Isa. 31:1).

8. Bare a son. Again there is no positive statement that the prophet is the father of this child (see on v. 6).

9. Lo-ammi. Heb. *Lo' 'ammi*, "not my people." Some see in this name a final recognition by Hosea of the adultery of Gomer; that is, the prophet is saying that the child is not of his family. In any event, the name given to the child was symbolic of God's relationship to the northern kingdom of Israel.

Ye are not my people. In this strong fashion God indicates His rejection of Israel as a nation because of their sins, the severance of His covenant relation with them.

10. Yet the number. Mingled with the prophecy of the breakup of the kingdom of Israel (v. 4) is the promise of restoration. Note the resemblance here to the promise given to Abraham (Gen. 22:17), and to that given to Jacob (Gen. 32:12). The promised restoration would not be to the ten tribes as such, but to Israel and Judah together (see on v. 11). However, the children of Israel did not live up to the glorious destiny that the Lord had planned for them (see pp. 30–32). The apostle Paul shows how this prophecy will be fulfilled with respect to the Gentiles (Rom. 9:25, 26; see pp. 35, 36).

Sons of the living God. This promise now meets its fulfillment in the Christian church. Through the acceptance by faith of the gospel we, whether Jews or Gentiles, are adopted as individuals into the family of God (Rom. 9:24–26), and so become heirs of eternal life (see John 1:11, 12; Rom. 8:14–17; Gal. 3:26, 29; Rev. 21:7; cf. Paul's illustration of the grafting into the fig tree of true Israel, Rom. 11).

It was on the basis of the covenant relationship that God acknowledged Israel as His "people." The name *Lo' 'ammi* thus implied an annulment of the covenant, and the statement, "Ye are the sons of the living God," its restoration.

11. Children of Judah. Judah and Israel are spoken of together to indicate that God's plan for His chosen people was that they should be united in one nation. Later prophets emphasized this same truth (see Jer. 3:18; 50:4, 5, 33; Eze. 37:16–22; etc.). Representatives from the tribes of Israel were among the exiles who returned after the captivity of Judah (see on Ezra 6:17).

Come up out of the land. Evidently a reference to the return from the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity.

Jezreel. Whereas in v. 4 Hosea uses the name "Jezreel" to represent the scattering of the people, here (as in ch. 2:22, 23) the prophet employs "Jezreel" to express the sowing of God's love and mercy toward His people.

This chapter stresses the truth that "God is not mocked" (Gal. 6:7). If we disobey Him, we cannot expect to escape the penalty for our transgressions. Hosea's three children, representing the apostate children of Israel, declare by their names the successively severer punishments for this apostasy. However, divine mercy is here pictured as strongly as is divine judgment. God is a God of justice and love (see Ps. 85:10; 89:14).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

10 AA 174, 376; PK 292

CHAPTER 2

1 *The idolatry of the people*. 6 *God's judgments against them*. 14 *His promises of reconciliation with them*.

1. Ammi. Literally, "my people."

Ruhamah. Literally, "pitied," or "having received compassion." These words set forth the climax of God's love and sound a note of encouragement.

2. Plead. The people of Israel are charged to contend, plead, with their mother, the nation of Israel, to repent and to return to God.

Not my wife. The prophet is believed to have used throughout ch. 2 the actual experiences of his unfaithful wife as a representation of unfaithful Israel. Since Israel had committed spiritual adultery with idols, she had naturally ceased to be the spouse of God. She was no longer united to Him by faith and love, and so God disowned her. Hosea depicts in ch. 2 God's deep sorrow because of Israel's unfaithfulness.

3. Strip her naked. Israel would be reduced to the condition she was in when God first chose her as His people, a downtrodden nation of slaves. Compare Eze. 16:39.

As in the day. Israel would become helpless, weak, uncared for, as the Hebrews were when God called them out of Egypt. This same figure was enlarged upon by the prophet Ezekiel (see Eze. 16).

As a wilderness. The land once "flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 3:8, 17) would then be turned into a desolate wilderness (see Jer. 9:12, 26; Jer. 22:6; etc.).

Slay her with thirst. Compare Eze. 19:13. The lamentable outward condition of the land reflects the inward spiritual state of the people, for the soul that has forsaken God, and in turn is forsaken by God, is solitary and desolate, troubled with a burning thirst (see on Jer. 2:13).

4. Not have mercy. The children are prone to go in the evil ways of their parents and thus become partakers of their punishments (see on Ex. 20:5).

Children of whoredoms. If this refers to the children mentioned in ch. 1, it indicates that they, or at least two of the three, were not actually the prophet's own children (see on ch. 1:6, 8). This passage calls attention to the persistent evil of Israel's succeeding generations. The children proved themselves no better than the mother that bore them.

5. Lovers. The surrounding nations, the Assyrians and the Egyptians, upon which Israel relied to help her when in danger from her enemies, are elsewhere so designated (see on Jer. 3:1; 22:20; 30:14). However, the reference here seems to be more particularly to the foreign gods whose worship the Israelites avidly accepted (see on v. 13).

My bread and my water. Instead of being grateful to God for supplying them with their needs and comforts, as was David (see 1 Chron. 29:10–14), the apostate Israelites shamelessly credited their idols with giving them the necessities of life (see Jer. 44:17, 18). This same lack of gratitude to God for furnishing the material benefits of life is all too current today.

6. Hedge up thy way. God now pronounces judgment upon Israel in His determination to thwart her course of sin and shame. He will obstruct her purpose. How true is the statement of Thomas à Kempis in his *Imitation of Christ* that "man proposes, but God disposes." It is the mercy of God that this is so, for He knows best what is for our ultimate good. Martin Luther is said to have declared, "O unhappy men, when God leaves them to themselves and does not resist them in their lusts! You bless yourselves many times that in the way of sin you find no difficulty. Bless thyself! Thou hast cause to

howl and wring thy hands; thou hast the curse of God on thee. A dreadful curse to make pleasant the way of sin."

No; God does not let the sinner go unrestrained. Repeatedly this principle is affirmed in the Bible (see Job 19:8; Prov. 16:1, 9; 19:21; Jer. 10:23; Lam. 3:7, 9). For their own spiritual benefit Israel would soon experience the "hedge" and the "wall" of the Assyrian captivity. The remnant of the exiles who held to the worship of Jehovah (see on 2 Kings 17:23) were forever rescued from the evils of idol worship.

7. Shall not overtake. Israel's efforts to find her lovers (see on v. 5) would be in vain. Neither the heathen nations around nor their deities would be able to assist Israel in her hour of need. If this was indeed the actual experience of Gomer (see on v. 2), it indicates that her adulterous associates were not interested in giving her permanent support, and avoided meeting her whenever possible.

My first husband. In the experience of Israel, the Lord was her "first husband." If the exact parallel was true in the life of the prophet, this is an indication that Hosea was Gomer's "first husband," and, hence, that she did not become involved with other "husbands" until after her marriage to the prophet.

Then was it better. The same experience was true of the prodigal son in our Lord's parable, "when he came to himself" (Luke 15:17) and realized that "then" in his father's house it was "better with" him "than now" among the husks.

8. She did not know. This reveals the sinful ignorance of God's people and their ingratitude toward the true Giver of "every good gift and every perfect gift" (James 1:17).

Multiplied her silver and gold. The prosperity in trade and commerce with which Israel was favored, especially in the reign of Jeroboam II (see Vol. II, p. 83), resulted in this increase. Instead of using this wealth for the glory of God, apostate Israel employed it in idolatrous practices in rebellion against the ways of God. Tragically, "Jeshurun [Israel] waxed fat, and kicked" (see on Deut. 32:15). In return for His mercies God justly expects that we give Him thanks, and use His blessings for His praise.

In this materialistic age, when human knowledge and skill tempt us to be proud of our own self-sufficient productiveness, we must guard ourselves against the danger of being ungrateful to God for all His benefits (see Ps. 103:1, 2).

Prepared for Baal. The final irony of the situation is that these God-given benefits were attributed to Baal and used in service for him.

9. Therefore will I return. God determines to turn away from mercy to merited judgment. He will inflict this punishment on Israel by depriving His people of the bounties they had so misused in idolatry and sin. The abuse of mercy will cause the removal of mercy (see on Gen. 6:3). At times God may withhold His good things from us that we may know that they come from Him and that He desires our appreciative fellowship.

My. In v. 5 Gomer claims that the material benefits listed were gifts from her lovers; here Hosea denies Gomer's implied charge of nonsupport and states that he had provided her with these things. Similarly the blessings Israel enjoyed had come from God, but Israel had prostituted these blessings to the service of idols (see ch. 10:1; pp. 32, 33).

Corn. The necessities of life—food and raiment—will be taken away by some disaster of nature, such as storm or drought, or by hostile invasion. When we refuse to keep God in mind (see Rom. 1:28), our blessings will be cursed (Mal. 2:2). We will be brought to recognize that we are only the stewards of Heaven's gifts and not the

proprietors of them. If we will not know the Giver through abundance we may be led to know Him through want.

10. Discover. Literally, "uncover," or "reveal" (see Lam. 4:22).

Lewdness. Continuing the figure of Hosea's faithless wife, the Lord warns that disgrace will follow deprivation in the case of Israel. She who was once a delight is now held in contempt and disdain.

Her lovers. See on v. 5.

None shall deliver. See on Lam. 1:2, 17.

11. Mirth. Sin and mirth cannot hold long together, for if Israel will not remove sin from her mirth, God will remove mirth from her sin. Worldly mirth is but a mimicry of real soul joy. The latter is a river, deep and clear, while the former is but a superficial sparkling bubble that lasts but a short time (see 1 John 2:15–17). One of the great purposes of Christ's first advent was to give us genuine, satisfying joy (John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13).

Feast days. It was in vain that Israel observed some of the forms and ceremonies of the Lord's worship while in spirit and apostasy she held on to idolatry (see on 1 Kings 12:32). Such an impossible compromise worship of God and the devil could end only in the disaster of captivity.

New moons. Feasts held on the first day of each month (see on Num. 28:11, 14).

Sabbaths. Some have seized upon this verse as proof that the weekly Sabbath was to be abolished. However, careful attention to the context of the passage proves the fallacy of such reasoning. The prophet here declares that all the various feasts and days of holy joy of the northern kingdom would cease, owing to the coming captivity of the nation. Not the abolition of the Sabbath, or of any religious service for that matter, is foretold by this text, but rather the abolition of a rebellious nation. All Christians agree that God did not desire that the Passover, or any other annual feast that He had instituted, be abolished at that particular time, which was several hundred years before the first advent of Christ. Then consistency calls for us to believe that the Bible writer is not here even hinting that the weekly Sabbath of the Lord was to be abolished, either then, or at any future date.

Solemn feasts. Literally, "the feasts of a set time."

12. Destroy her vines. God now threatens to take away the means of support, thus cutting off all future hope (see on Ps. 107:33, 34). The vines and fig trees are symbolic of prosperity and peace (see on 1 Kings 4:25; Jer. 5:17).

My rewards. "My hire" (LXX; RSV); the payment given to an adulteress or a woman of ill fame.

A forest. Heb. *ya'ar*, "a thicket," or "a wood." The land where these fruitful trees and vines grew will be turned into a region of uncultivated brushwood.

13. Visit. The word here implies "to punish" (see on Hosea 1:4; Ps. 8:4; 59:5).

Baalim. A transliteration of the Hebrew plural of Baal. The name Baal was used generally to designate any of various local gods (see on v. 17). The use of this term is an indication that the term "lovers" as used here is a reference to the false gods of the heathen nations rather than to the nations themselves.

Burned incense. This indicates the manner of the worship that Israel transferred from the Lord's feast days to those of Baal.

Earrings and her jewels. Sinful Israel adorned herself with beautiful ornaments in devotion to her heathen "lovers."

14. I will allure her. This abrupt transition heightens the picture of the persistent, unfailing love of God toward His people in spite of all their waywardness. Note the striking contrast between Israel's "forgat me" in the previous verse and God's "allure her" in this. We may forget God, but He cannot forget us (Isa. 49:14–16).

Into the wilderness. Since Egypt was Israel's house of bondage, the exodus into the wilderness represented deliverance and redemptive freedom. The wilderness also was the preparatory school in which God trained Israel for Canaan and for national development, the place where God entered into covenant relationship with His people while they were on their way to the Promised Land. What God had attempted to accomplish for Israel at the time of the wilderness experience He would seek to accomplish for her in Hosea's day.

15. Vineyards. The wilderness would be transformed into a place of vineyards (see on Hosea 2:12; Isa. 35:1).

Valley of Achor. Literally, "valley of trouble," doubtless a reference to the events that followed the sin of Achan (see on Joshua 6:18; 7:24). When Achan's thievery was discovered and its curse removed from the camp, the defeat of Ai was changed into signal victory. In the disconsolate camp of Israel, despair gave way to the sure hope that the Promised Land would soon be possessed. So for Israel's comfort now, Hosea assures the people that Israel's affliction will open to them in the future the "door of hope," the door of restoration from captivity. Likewise the troubles of life that come to us, if accepted and patiently endured in the right spirit of humility and abiding faith in God, are but the "doors of hope" opening to us larger possessions of soul power (2 Cor. 4:17; 7:9–11).

Sing. Heb. *'anah*. This word has four different basic meanings: (1) "to answer," "to reply"; (2) "to be downcast," "to be afflicted"; (3) "to be occupied"; (4) "to sing," "to howl [of animals]." The RSV has "answer." As ancient Israel "in the days of her youth," when she passed through the Red Sea, sang the triumphant song of Moses (see Ex. 15), so again would Israel sing of her deliverance. "Answer" carries the thought that Israel thankfully acknowledges God's tokens of love and now intends to do God's will.

16. Call me Ishi. The Hebrew word *'ishi* means "my husband," indicating God's purpose, after the Captivity, to renew His covenant with all Israel, hence, in figure, to be remarried to her.

No more Baali. The Hebrew word *ba'ali* may also mean "my husband." However, the term describes the husband from the point of view of being master or owner. Some commentators suggest that *ba'ali* is a term of stern authority and rule in contrast with "my husband," a title of tender affection, and that since God is a God of love, He desires that we serve Him from love and not from fear (see 1 John 4:18, 19). Others suggest that the name *ba'ali* was to be discontinued because of its idolatrous associations.

17. Baalim. The popularity of the name Baal at various periods in Israel's history may be demonstrated by the following list: Baal-berith (Judges 8:33); Baal-gad (Joshua 11:17); Baal-hamon (S. of Sol. 8:11); Baal-hazor (2 Sam. 13:23); Baal-hermon (Judges 3:3); Baal-meon (Num. 32:38); Baal-peor (Num. 25:3); Baal-perazim (2 Sam. 5:20); Baal-shalisha (2 Kings 4:42); Baal-tamar (Judges 20:33); Baal-zebub (2 Kings 1:2); Baal-zephon (Ex. 14:2).

18. Break the bow. In the coming restoration the nation would depend upon God for protection (see on ch. 1:7).

19. For ever. The previous marriage had ended in disaster. Israel had "played the harlot" (v. 5) and God had disowned her (v. 2). But He was willing to take back His unfaithful spouse and restore her to her former estate. It was hoped that the unsatisfying experience of her former waywardness would help to assure the permanence of the new contract. God was willing to do His part. As far as He was concerned the new union was to continue "for ever." Whether the plan was to succeed or not depended on Israel (see p. 34).

20. Know the Lord. Israel knew the mechanics of the Lord's worship, the sacrifices, the feast days, and other ceremonies connected with that worship; but they did not know God. In fact, the very religious worship and service of God had become to them, as they may be to us, a deceptive displacement of God Himself. The worship and service of God are vain unless we know the God whom we worship and serve (see Matt. 7:22, 23; John 17:3).

21. I will hear. Literally, "I will answer." The source of Israel's prosperity is depicted in vs. 21, 22 by a graphic descending climax. God answers the heavens; the heavens answer the earth; and the earth answers the crops. Thus the material prosperity of Israel is traced by the prophet to its proper source, the Giver of all (see on vs. 5, 8).

22. Jezreel. In ch. 1:4 Hosea employs this word to mean "scatter," in an evil sense (see comments there). Here he uses the word to mean "scattering" in the good sense of sowing seed. Jezreel becomes a name that joins the recollection of God's past punishment with the assurance of His future mercy.

23. Sow her unto me. A promise that, after the Captivity, Israel would be replanted in the Promised Land.

I will have mercy. See on ch. 1:10.

In v. 23 the metaphorical meaning of the names of Gomer's three children is reversed and picturesquely used to represent the restored marital relationship. Formerly (see on ch. 1:4) Jezreel meant "God will scatter," but here God says, "I will sow." Instead of Lo-ruhamah, "not pitied" (ch. 1:6), God now promises to "have mercy." Instead of Lo-ammi, "not my people" (ch. 1:9), God now says, "Thou art my people."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

14–17PK 298
14–206T 409
18–23PK 299
19 GC 381
23 AA 174; 8T 57

CHAPTER 3

1 *By the expiation of an adulteress*, 4 *is shewed the desolation of Israel before their restoration*.

1. Go yet. Or, "go again." This refers to the command of ch. 1:2 (see on ch. 1:2).

A woman. Though not specifically stated here, the reference is undoubtedly to Hosea's former wife. Only by regarding the narrative in this light does the experience become an effective illustration of God's love for wayward Israel and His willingness to renew His covenant with her.

Beloved of her friend. By a slight change in the traditional Hebrew vowels (see Vol. I, pp. 25, 26), the LXX has obtained a translation of the clause which reads, "love a woman that loves evil things." The translation "friend" may refer either to her lawful husband or to one of her lovers.

Flagons of wine. Heb. *'ashishe 'anabim*, "a raisin-cake," made of dried, compressed grapes. These delicacies are here condemned probably because of their connection with the worship of false gods.

2. Bought her. Evidently Gomer had fallen into some type of debt or slavery after she had left Hosea (see ch. 2:7).

Fifteen pieces. About half the price of a manservant (see on Ex. 21:32).

Homer. An homer is 6.24 bu. (220 liters); thus the total barley paid was 9.36 bu. (330 liters) (see Vol. I, p. 167). The price paid by the prophet, partly in money and partly in barley (counted an inferior cereal in Palestine), was approximately that of a common maidservant. Thus was set forth strikingly the low, degraded estate of Hosea's wife. The use of barley as part payment may itself have reflected this degradation by suggesting the "barley meal" offered when a wife was suspected of adultery (see Num. 5:11–15). Could any symbol show more pointedly the debased state to which Israel had fallen?

3. Abide for me many days. The full reunion was to be delayed, perhaps to allow for a period of probation, or for a period of purification, discipline, and instruction.

So will I also be. That is, the prophet himself would not resume fully the family relationship with her for "many days." Likewise Israel, separated from both her lovers and her Husband, would for "many days" be removed from her old idols and at the same time be cut off from her full covenant privileges.

4. Without a king. From the beginning of the Captivity, Israel was for "many days" without her own government.

An image. Heb. *maṣṣebah*, "a stone pillar," or "an obelisk," often employed in connection with idolatrous worship (see on Deut. 16:22; 1 Kings 14:23).

Ephod. See on Ex. 28:6–12.

Teraphim. Images. See on Gen. 31:19.

5. Israel return. A reference to Israel's return from captivity (see on ch. 1:11).

David their king. The ten tribes had rebelled and had broken away from the house of David (1 Kings 12:16, 25–33). To them was made no promise of a return to their former status of national independence following the Captivity. In the restoration of Judah individual members of the tribes might share, and doubtless many did (see on Hosea 1:11). But those who returned would all be under one king (Eze. 37:16–28). The final fulfillment of Hosea's prediction will come "at the close of earth's history, when Christ shall appear" (PK 298).

Fear the Lord. See on Deut. 28:67.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4, 5 PK 298

CHAPTER 4

1 *God's judgments against the sins of the people*, 6 *and of the priests*, 12 *and against their idolatry*. 15 *Judah is exhorted to take warning by Israel's calamity*.

1. Hear the word. This chapter begins a new division of Hosea's prophecies. The prophet discontinues his use of figure and symbol, and now employs plain, literal prose.

It seems evident from their contents that the messages of chs. 4–14 came much later than the time of Jeroboam II (see ch. 1:1).

The Lord hath a controversy. God's people are called upon to give heed to the charge preferred against them, and to the sentence pronounced. As Heaven's spokesman Hosea presents the case against Israel, vindicating the divine justice in dealing with her.

As here used, "controversy" is equivalent to the first meaning of the metaphorical name Jezreel (see on ch. 1:3). The ideas of "scatter" and "controversy" stand parallel to each other.

No truth. The prophet begins by declaring that his people lack the essentials of true religion. Without these essentials, the worship of God is nothing but empty pretense.

Mercy. Heb. *chesed*, for a definition of which see Additional Note Psalm 36.

2. By swearing. Turning from Israel's spiritual deficiencies, Hosea now presents her sins of commission, a veritable flood of evils. The absence of truth, mercy, and knowledge (v. 1) produces all these terrible crimes in the land.

3. Therefore. The sufferings listed (vs. 3–5) are stated to be a result of the sins of Israel, particularly of those mentioned in v. 12.

Shall the land mourn. Compare Isa. 33:9.

Beasts. On account of his sin man has brought suffering upon the animal world. Compare Rom. 8:19–23.

4. Strive. All the people were evil, hence none should reprove others for their wrongdoing. The passage may also mean that so stubbornly set in sin are the offenders that it is useless to reason with them.

Strive with the priest. One of the functions of the priest was to teach the truths of God to the people (Mal. 2:7; see on 2 Chron. 15:3). Those who refuse to obey and reverence the true priests of God deserve Hosea's severe condemnation (see also Deut. 17:8–13).

5. Shall fall. Heb. *kashal*, "to stumble," "to stagger," or "to totter." So relentless would be the coming calamities that at no time, day or night, would any escape, whether they be people or priests.

Destroy thy mother. That is, the nation of Israel itself (see ch. 2:2–5). The LXX reads, "I have compared thy mother unto night," conveying the thought that Israel would go into the dark night of sorrow, distress, and the silence of destruction at the time of her captivity.

6. For lack of knowledge. Literally, "for lack of the knowledge." The particular knowledge that is missing is the knowledge of God, the most essential of all knowledge. Isaiah ascribed the Captivity to such a lack (see on Isa. 5:13). Though God may overlook certain forms of ignorance (see Acts 17:30), He cannot deliberate ignorance of spiritual things (see on Ex. 4:21). The people would inevitably be "destroyed" because of their lack of the essential knowledge. They might have had the knowledge had they put forth the effort to obtain it. Men are held responsible not only for what they know (John 9:41; 15:22, 24; James 4:17), but also for what they might have known had they put forth the effort to obtain essential knowledge (cf. 2 Peter 3:5). There are many who fear that a further investigation of truth will reveal that a change in conduct may be required of them, a change that their sin-loving hearts are unwilling to undertake, and so they deliberately desist from further inquiry. Such willful ignorance God cannot excuse.

Rejected knowledge. Literally, "rejected the knowledge." The priest, or perhaps rather the priestly order, is addressed (see vs. 8, 9).

No priest. This indicates that possibly the principal cause of this ignorance on the part of the people lay at the door of the unfaithful priests, who rejected the knowledge of the true God and His law, which they should have taught the people (see Deut. 33:10; Mal. 2:1–9; see on 2 Chron. 15:3).

To me. That is, to God. The priests whom Jeroboam I appointed when he separated the kingdom of Israel from Judah (see 1 Kings 12:25–33) were not priests of the Lord but priests of the golden calves.

Law. Heb. *torah* (see on Deut. 31:9; Prov. 3:1).

7. As they were increased. The nation was increased in population and in economic wealth, owing to the prosperity of Jeroboam II's reign (see on ch. 2:8). However, the primary reference may still be to the priests (see on v. 6), who increased in wealth and power.

Shame. Heb. *qalon*, "ignominy," or "dishonor."

8. Sin. Heb. *chaṭṭa'th*, "sin," or "sin offering." This passage probably describes the greedy priests who encouraged sin by urging the people to bring more and more sacrifices, since they ate the meat of these sacrifices (Lev. 6:26), and no doubt built up a traffic in such meat (see on 1 Sam. 2:12). The more sins, the more sacrifices, and so the greater profit and pleasure.

9. Like people, like priest. The people and their priests were bound together in sin. The apostate priests engaged in the very iniquities they should have reproved. In turn, the people, taking note of the worldliness and self-indulgence of the priests, hid behind their example. As someone has said, "Neither secular greatness should exempt the laity, nor the dignity of his order, the priest." Both alike will be held responsible before the judgment bar of God.

Reward. Literally, "cause to return"; hence, here "repay," or "recompense."

Doings. The daring, presumptuous actions of Israel against the law and will of God are here implied.

10. Not have enough. This would be their punishment for eating "up the sin of my people" (v. 8).

Shall not increase. The reference here is probably to religious prostitution connected with fertility cults, around which much of ancient Canaanite worship centered (see Vol. II, pp. 38–41). Despite the worship of the goddess of fertility, the population would not increase, for the blessing of Heaven had been removed from Israel.

11. Whoredom and wine. These vices are pertinently put together to show their force in depriving man of his true and proper affections, his reason, and his understanding (see on Gen. 9:21).

Take away the heart. The "heart" is used here to represent the mind, the understanding, the affections. As a man thinks "in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). If a person's mind, understanding, and affections are vitiated and corrupted by lustful excesses, he sacrifices his possibilities for service for God (see Prov. 4:23). One of the lamentable accompaniments of Israel's worship of strange gods was the indulgence in the licentious rites and the debasing moral conduct that accompanied idol worship.

12. Stocks. That is, wooden images.

Staff. Probably a rod employed for divination purposes.

Spirit of whoredoms. This irrepressible, bewitching desire to worship idols, Hosea likens to spiritual adultery, which tragically drew Israel away from the Lord. The "spirit of whoredoms" may also describe the vehemence that possessed men and caught them up in the whirl and excitement of evil passions.

From under their God. A wife was spoken of as being under her husband; that is, under his authority (see on Num. 5:19). This relationship ceased when she gave herself to another, as was true of Israel when she withdrew from the Lord and joined herself to her idols.

13. Tops of the mountains. Here we have a further enlargement on the subject of idolatry, particularly as it was seen in public life. The heathen commonly selected the mountains and hills as their places of worship because of the elevation of these heights (see on Eze. 6:13).

Shadow thereof. The green trees mentioned afforded a welcome shade from the intense heat of the Eastern sun, and also provided some secrecy for the practice of licentious rites. In such places sacrificial victims were slain and incense burned as an honor to the gods (see on Jer. 7:31).

Spouses. Rather, "brides," or "daughters-in-law." The evil example of the parents influenced the children to go in the same direction, and with the same results (Lam. 5:7; see on Hosea 2:4).

14. I will not punish. These "daughters" and "spouses" were less guilty than the lascivious fathers and husbands who had led them astray.

Harlots. That is, "temple prostitutes." These were women who devoted themselves to licentiousness in the service of the gods. Since ancient times such persons have been connected with idolatrous worship in many heathen lands (see on Deut. 23:17).

Doth not understand. See on v. 6.

15. Let not Judah offend. Hosea, as if despairing of any change in Israel's ungodly attitude, appeals warningly to the southern kingdom of Judah (vs. 15–17). Israel was so close to Judah geographically, and some of Judah's later kings were so influenced by idolatry, that there was grave danger that the south would follow the north in apostasy. See p. 31; see on chs. 11:12; 12:1, 2.

Come not ye. Here we have a specific charge forbidding pilgrimages to idol-worship centers, such as Gilgal and Beth-aven.

Gilgal. There was more than one town in the territory of the northern kingdom that bore this name (see on 1 Sam. 11:15; 2 Kings 2:1). The name Gilgal appears prominently in the history of Israel (see Joshua 4:19, 20; 5:9, 10; 9:6; 10:6–9, 43; 14:6; 1 Sam. 10:8; 11:14, 15; 13:4–8; 15:21, 33; 2 Kings 4:38). It is uncertain which Gilgal the prophet refers to here.

Beth-aven. Literally, "the house of evil power," or "the house of wickedness." This is probably an ironic epithet for Bethel, which means literally, "the house of God" (see Gen. 28:19–22). However, when Jeroboam I set up calf worship at Bethel (see 1 Kings 12:25–33) and made of the city a house of false gods, the name Bethel became singularly inappropriate. Bethel was a prominent place in the religious history of God's people (see Gen. 28:19; 35:15).

Nor swear. The hypocritical profession of the worship of the Lord must not be made by those in idolatry (see 1 Kings 12:28).

16. Backsliding. Literally, "stubborn," or "rebellious." The people of the northern kingdom were determined to have their own way, and so were like an unmanageable heifer that resists being trained and cannot be used to plow.

Feed them as a lamb. Some have suggested that this means God will deservedly and justly leave Israel to itself, as a lamb is left in a field to roam at will without provision and without protection. Instead of the controls and yoke (see on Matt. 11:29, 30) of God's commandments, she would have the license of a desert, where there would be no protecting hedges. In this condition, without the shepherd's watchful care, a lamb would easily fall prey to ravenous beasts, and so perish. Few creatures are more helpless than a lamb that has strayed from its shepherd (see Luke 15:3–7). So will it be with Israel.

Others have suggested that this clause should be considered a question rather than a statement; thus it would read, "Will the Lord now feed them as a lamb in a large place?"

17. Ephraim. Ephraim was the principal tribe of the northern kingdom, and the name was frequently applied to the entire kingdom (see on Jer. 7:15). Similarly the name Judah was applied to the southern kingdom.

Let him alone. Iniquitous folly welded Ephraim to idolatry, and so left him to an inescapable fate. The ten tribes had gone so far in idolatry that to them was made no promise of complete restoration (see PK 298). Evidently only a few scattered members of the ten tribes in exile later joined Judah to return to Palestine after the Captivity.

God does not coerce the will. He pleads with men to accept the way of life (Eze. 33:11), but leaves it with them as to "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear" (Eze. 2:5). Those who persistently refuse to accept the offers of mercy are left to reap the fruits of their own choosing (Gen. 6:3; Ps. 81:10–16; Prov. 1:25–33; Rev. 22:11).

18. Her rulers. Literally, "her shields," meaning the princes as the protectors of the nation (see on Ps. 47:9).

19. The wind hath bound. Perhaps a figure referring to the storm of divine judgment which will be loosed on Ephraim, sweeping him into captivity. This figure is in striking contrast to that of the "eagles' wings" that bore the Hebrews out of Egypt toward the Promised Land (Ex. 19:4; Deut. 32:9–12). With patience and long-suffering God bears with sinners, calling them to repentance. Even the predicted captivity of the ten tribes came in gradual stages (see on Hosea 7:9).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PK 281
1, 2 GC 60; PK 297
6 COL 306; CT 467; GC 60; PK 297
6–9, 16PK 281
17 COL 237; PK 285; PP 165, 405; 1T 187, 383, 486; 3T 544; 5T 190

CHAPTER 5

1 *God's judgments against the priests, the people, and the princes of Israel, for their manifold sins*, 15 *until they repent*.

1. Hear ye this. The various classes of people of the northern kingdom are here addressed, priests, citizens, and members of the royal family. In God's imperial realm of moral and spiritual requirements all stand free and equal in obeying or disobeying the divine law of righteousness. There is no respect of persons; all are placed on the same level and will be judged by the same standard (see on Deut. 10:17).

Judgment is toward you. To the priests had been given the authority to teach the people (2 Chron. 15:3); to the king and his princes, the right and prerogative to execute civil judgments upon Israel. Now, however, because the entire nation is enmeshed in sin, leaders as well as people are the subjects of divine judgment, for these leaders have "been a snare" to the nation instead of being the people's safeguard.

The announcement of "judgment" carries out the threat implied in the sign-name of Lo-ruhamah (see on ch. 1:6). Here, "judgment" is equivalent to Lo-ruhamah, "not pitied," or "no mercy" (see on ch. 2:23).

Mizpah. Perhaps mentioned along with Tabor to show the wide extent of the nation's evil influence, Mt. Tabor being west of the river Jordan, and Mizpah probably in Gilead. It is generally assumed that this does not refer to the Mizpah of Benjamin, since that was in the southern kingdom.

2. Revolters. The Hebrew of the first half of v. 2 is uncertain.

I have been a rebuker. Willful and desperately sinful men may abandon all the criteria of righteousness, but God cannot be put out of the human conscience and experience (see Acts 26:14). No other witness against the sinner is needed than his own conscience. The wicked cannot deceive the all-knowing Rebuker nor evade the penalty of their wrongdoing (Ps. 33:13–15; Heb. 4:13).

3. Not hid from me. See on v. 2.

O Ephraim. This powerful, leading tribe was apparently the ringleader in calf worship and other idolatries, through this evil influence all Israel was defiled.

4. Not frame their doings. Or, "their doings do not allow." So far have they gone into transgression that they find it impossible now to turn back to repentance as a nation. How forcefully this indicates the power of habit in human experience (see Jer. 13:23; 2 Peter 2:12–14). The outward actions of the people indicate that they had become so corrupt that the "inner man" could not be reached by the Spirit (see Eph. 3:16).

The spirit of whoredoms. For comment see on ch. 4:12.

5. Pride. Heb. *ga'on* (see on Ps. 47:4; Jer. 12:5). This may be a reference to the Lord, who was Israel's excellency. In this case, the God who should have been the people's glory, but who was now ignored and slighted by them, will testify against them to the face through punishments upon them. Or "pride" here may refer to the prosperity and flourishing condition of Israel in Hosea's day (see on Hosea 2:8), which engendered the haughtiness that brought about her unwillingness to do God's will; a pride, which the LXX says, "shall be brought low before his face" (see Prov. 16:18; 18:12).

Judah also. The burden of the prophet's message was directed toward Israel, but occasionally the kingdom of Judah was included "also."

6. Go with their flocks. With many and costly sacrifices Ephraim seeks to propitiate the Lord (see 1 Sam. 15:22; Hosea 6:6).

Shall not find him. The people of Israel were not moved by true repentance, but by fear of approaching affliction. Love to God, which yields obedience, was not in their hearts (see Heb. 12:16, 17; see on Gen. 27:38).

7. Strange children. See on ch. 2:4.

Now shall a month devour them. Some have suggested that this implies that only a short time remains before the destruction of the kingdom. According to the alternative translation of the RSV, "now the new moon shall devour them," the meaning is conveyed that their sacrificial feasts celebrated at that season will not save them from divine wrath.

The whole chapter is a record of the people's substitution of idol worship for the worship of God, and this passage may thus be an allusion to the substitution of a different month for the Lord's appointed month for religious worship, which substitution had been forced upon the nation by Jeroboam I (1 Kings 12:33).

8. Cornet. Heb. *shophar* (see Vol. III, p. 39). Hosea presents a graphic picture of Israel's enemies as already on the march to execute the divine judgment.

Gibeah. Gibeah and Ramah were located in Benjamin, near its northern boundary and within the southern kingdom. They were suitable for giving signals of approaching danger because of their being situated on eminences.

Beth-aven. For comment see on ch. 4:15.

9. Desolate. Literally, "a horror," or "a dreadful event [causing horror]." The day of rebuke is the time when God reproves sin by punishment.

10. Remove the bound. One who dared to remove his neighbor's landmarks was violating one of Jehovah's precepts (see Deut. 19:14; 27:17). In their utterly reckless and selfish disregard of the rights of others, the leaders of Judah did not hesitate to stoop to evils such as removing these boundaries. In this chapter Hosea interestingly and significantly mixes the condemnation and consequent punishment of both Israel and Judah. It is not difficult to see why this should be, since Judah's judgment and captivity followed, and not too long afterward, the punishment and captivity of Israel. The kingdoms may be different, but their ultimate fate will be the same. Hence the prophet's composite picture.

I will pour out my wrath. An emphatic, strong overflowing of divine wrath is meant, which will completely overwhelm these lawless leaders.

11. Oppressed and broken. Or, "oppressed and crushed." God will use the heathen to chastise His people.

The commandment. Literally, "a commmand." Rather than follow the commandments of God, the people obeyed those of men (see Matt. 15:7–9). It is likely that this specifically refers to the command of Jeroboam I to worship the calves, when he revolted from Judah (see 1 Kings 12:25–33).

12. As a moth. This is a graphic figure depicting the gradual decline and decay of Israel's moral and spiritual life. The moth that eats garments aptly represents slow but sure destruction (Job 13:28).

13. His sickness. Both Israel and Judah sensed their national decline. However, instead of turning to God for help, Ephraim turned to Assyria. Ephraim alone is mentioned as seeking this assistance because the northern kingdom was the first to become involved with Assyria (2 Kings 15–18).

Jareb. Heb. *yareb*. We do not know to what Assyrian king, if any, this name applied. Some suggest that *yareb*, instead of being a proper name, is a descriptive term, possibly from the root *rib*, "to contend." Hence they suggest the phrase, "the king who contends." Others assume that the root is *rabab*, "to be great," and suggest the title "the great king." The latter meaning is given support by the common title used by the kings of Assyria, *sharru rabū*, "the great king" (compare the Ugaritic *mlk rb*, "the great king." Compare

also the origin of the title "rabbi," see on Isa. 19:20). The LXX reading, *Iarim*, suggests the title *malki ram*, "the exalted king."

Not heal you. Hosea reminds his people that whatever help they would seek outside of God would be in vain.

14. As a lion. A symbol of the destroying conqueror. As by a lion, which first rends its prey and then takes it away, God's people will first be rent, torn in pieces, and then carried away into captivity.

15. I will go and return. Still employing the figure of the lion that carries his prey away and then retires to his den or cave, the prophet represents God as withdrawing to His place in heaven after bringing captivity upon His people. When as a result of "their affliction" the people are truly repentant, and then only, will they find God, as Jeremiah so beautifully and tenderly expresses it in his prophecy (Jer. 29:10–14).

Acknowledge. The two necessary steps in repentance are confession of sin and surrender to God (see Ps. 32:1, 2, 5, 6; Isa. 59:1, 2).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

7 PK 279

11, 13 PK 280

CHAPTER 6

1 *An exhortation to repentance*. 4 *A complaint of their untowardness and iniquity*.

1. Come. Verses 1–3 are more closely related in thought to ch. 5:15 than to the remaining verses of ch. 6.

He hath torn. God's love for us makes His punishment of us a "strange act" (Isa. 28:21), and one that He is loath to employ. The essential purpose of His present discipline is to bring about reformation of life (see Ps 119:75; Lam. 3:31–33; Heb. 12:5–11).

He will heal. The Lord, not the Assyrian "Jareb" (see on ch. 5:13), nor any other human being (see Deut. 32:39), is the true Physician.

2. After two days. The expression "after two days … in the third day" seems to be a literary device employed to denote indefinite time (cf. 2 Kings 9:32; Amos 4:8). Hosea had predicted that the Lord would "heal" (ch. 6:1). Now he adds that the time of healing would be at an indefinite time in the future, although perhaps not far. There is no specific scriptural proof that this passage is a Messianic prediction of the resurrection of Christ, although this belief has been quite generally held.

Live in his sight To live in God's sight is to be in full harmony and loving fellowship with Him (see Num. 6:25, 26; Ps. 11:7; 17:15; 27:8, 9; 51:11; 67:1; 119:135).

3. To know the Lord. See on ch. 4:6.

His going forth. Clearly the antecedent of "his" is "the Lord." The passage fittingly describes the work of the coming Messiah (see PK 688).

As the morning. Appropriately, our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the dawn, or the Dayspring from on high (Luke 1:78). As the morning dawn quietly and gently breaks upon the earth, dispelling the shadows of the night and arousing the world to new life and activity, so will "the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2). Christ did not come in an outward display of glory to dazzle the senses of men; He rather gave to men the very measure of light needed for their soul's salvation.

Latter and former rain. The early rain, from the last of October to the first part of December (see on Deut. 11:14; Joel 2:23), following the dry season, allows the sowing of the seed in the autumn (the beginning of the Jewish civil and agricultural year). The latter rain in March and April, preceding and promoting the harvest, closes the winter rainy season, which peaks in January (see Vol. II, pp. 109, 110). In such expressive figurative language did Hosea assure his people of the abundant blessings of God that would revive and nourish their spiritual life.

4. What shall I do? God, having tried in various ways to persuade Israel and Judah to repent, finds His efforts unavailing, and so in sorrow asks what more He can do before He imposes chastisement (see on Isa. 5:4).

Early dew. The divine questioning was inspired by the people's short-lived piety. The history of God's chosen nation abundantly illustrates their fugitive, inconsistent piety. All of us need to learn this same lesson, for goodness is of little real worth unless it becomes permanent in the life, an attribute of the character.

5. Hewed them. The Hebrew refers to the hewing of stones for building purposes, an apt symbol of the fashioning of the human soul by the heavenly Sculptor into the "similitude of God" (James 3:9).

Thy judgments. The LXX and the Syriac versions read, "My judgment." Whichever reading is adopted, the reference is clearly an allusion to divine chastisement.

6. Not sacrifice. See on ch. 5:6.

Knowledge. Mercy is religion in practice; knowledge is the guide of proper conduct. Without these two basic elements religion tends to be mere empty form, and comes under the divine disfavor (see 1 Sam. 15:22; Prov. 21:3; Isa. 1:11–17; 2 Tim. 3:1–5).

7. They like men have transgressed. Or, "like Adam they have transgressed." In His supreme love for His children, God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden to be His representative on earth, and to have dominion over it (Gen. 1:26), but our first father violated God's command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:6, 22–24; Isa. 59:1, 2). Like Adam, Israel and Judah had been given a dwelling place by God; like Adam, they had broken God's covenant with them through iniquity; and like Adam, they would be driven out of the Land of Promise.

Having "treacherously" "transgressed the covenant," Israel was no longer God's people—a fact implied in the name Lo-ammi (see on chs. 1:9; 2:23). Israel's treachery is illustrated in a variety of ways (see chs. 6:4; 7:8, 11, 16).

8. Gilead is a city. An unidentified city in Gilead, the land east of the Jordan between the Yarmuk and Jabbok rivers (see on Gen. 31:47). The Gileadites are pictured here as murderous in nature (see 2 Kings 15:25), and consequently it is not surprising to find that they were among the first ones of the northern kingdom carried into captivity by Assyria (2 Kings 15:29).

9. As troops of robbers. A portrayal of the fearfully wicked state of the priests of the high places (see on ch. 4:13).

By consent. Most scholars agree that the Hebrew of this phrase should be rendered, "toward Shechem."

11. An harvest for thee. This may be used in a good sense, as a recompense, or in a bad sense, as retribution. Many scholars prefer the latter interpretation, since Judah, like Israel, went into apostasy, which would surely yield its harvest of sorrow in captivity (see 2 Chron. 36:1–21).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–3PK 283
3 AA 308, 564, 579; COL 67; CS 138; CT 212, 230; DA 261; Ed 106; FE 375; GC 611; MH 32; ML 60, 109; MYP 15; PK 688; RC 55, 62, 69; TM 241; 6T 199, 416, 421; 8T 247, 318
4 PK 285
5 Ev 573, 635; EW 71; TM 464; 2T 422
5–7PK 281

CHAPTER 7

1 *A reproof of manifold sins*. 11 *God's wrath against them for their hypocrisy*.

1. I would have healed. Some suggest that the healing mentioned refers to the prophetic admonitions and rebukes with which God purposed to heal His people's backslidings. Others hold that the healing refers to the partial restoration of the nation's prosperity in the reign of Jeroboam II (see 2 Kings 14:25–27; Hosea 2:8). However, Israel's moral and spiritual disease had been so obstinate and critical that it prevailed against the remedy God might have applied to it. The remedy seemed only to aggravate the disease and to reveal its malignancy.

Discovered. Or, "uncovered," or "revealed."

Robbers. Evidently gangs of highwaymen who publicly infested the roads, plundering the passers-by. They are contrasted with the "thief," who is depicted as doing his work secretly, within the house.

2. Consider not. So absorbed had Israel become in their crimes and transgressions that they no longer heard the "still small voice" of conscience (1 Kings 19:12). They failed to realize that they must someday appear before the judgment seat of God (Eccl. 12:14; 2 Cor. 5:10). They had forgotten that all of their actions were under the continuous scrutiny of the Lord (see Ps. 33:13–15; 90:8; Jer. 16:17; Heb. 4:13).

Their own doings. The figure is of their own iniquities besieging them as the enemies of their souls. Soon the citadels of conscience and righteous desire will utterly fall in defeat (see Prov. 5:22).

3. Make the king glad. So general had the moral corruption and wickedness of Israel become, that evil permeated all the classes of the people, from the lowest to the highest. This situation was aggravated by the degrading attitude of the king and his princes, who were pleased by this wickedness, and who approved this conduct. As with the king, so with the people (see Prov. 29:12; Rom. 1:32).

Some prefer another interpretation of this verse on the basis of the alternate translation: "In their wickedness they make the king merry." That is, the wickedness of the people was their evil plan to murder the royal family. With this in mind the king is made merry with wine so that he may become an easy and unsuspecting victim. The frequency of the assassination of Israel's kings during the last years of the nation's history lends some measure of support to this interpretation (see on v. 7).

4. All adulterers. The "all" includes the king, princes, and the people—the whole nation.

As An oven. In this picture the oven may be understood to represent the heart (see v. 6); the fire, man's unholy desires, appetites, passions; and the dough, the evil purposes or plans devised by the wicked plotters.

Who ceaseth from raising. This apparently represents the period of time that elapsed between the beginning and the accomplishment of their evil design. After starting the fire in the oven the baker allows it to continue burning, not stirring it until the kneaded dough is fully raised. So with Israel, a time was permitted for the leaven of wickedness to do its work.

5. Day of our king. The fact that Hosea speaks of "our king" identifies him with the northern kingdom. This "day" may mean some day in which a celebration was held to honor the king. In any case it was a day of excess, when drunkenness brought out the evil in men by removing the power of self-restraint. There is in this verse an implied warning against the use of alcoholic beverages because of their harmful effect upon manhood and womanhood (see Prov. 23:29–32; 31:4, 5; Hab. 2:15).

Scorners. Derived from the Hebrew verb *liṣ*, "to talk big," or "to mock" (see on Prov. 20:1). Instead of supporting the righteous elements of his kingdom, the king "stretched out his hand," that is, joined himself, with those who were the scorners of the good and true.

6. Made ready their heart. This shows why the people so openly carry on their wickedness. Their heart, as an oven, has been getting hotter and hotter through the accumulating fires of their evil inclinations and desires.

Sleepeth. The waiting time is the period when there is no open, active demonstration of evil. But though the fire of iniquity seems at times to be banked in the human heart, and thus passive, it is still the fire of iniquity, ready to break forth with the intensified heat of premeditated sin.

All the night. The baker, so to speak, sleeps while the dough is leavening, that is, while the diabolical design is being worked up. When all is in readiness, or "in the morning," the baker stirs up the fire, the oven is sufficiently heated, the baking begins; that is, the purposed evil is accomplished. The baker may be thought of as representing the ringleader of the plot.

7. All hot as an oven. This evidently denotes the intense temper of their passion and the fierceness and fiery power of destruction. They had carried their iniquity so far that its extreme heat, meant to consume others, caused their own doom (see Dan. 3:19–22). Satanic schemes and plans sooner or later react upon their instigators. The kings of Israel had influenced their people to evil. They had heated and inflamed them with the fires of sin, until all, kings and subjects, were caught in the flames of a common destruction.

Their judges. The magistrates and other officials.

All their kings. During this final period in Israel's history four out of five kings were put to death in 20 years; four in little more than a score, the victims being Zachariah, Shallum, Pekahiah, and Pekah. In the earlier days of the northern kingdom several other kings were slain by their successors or died violently or mysteriously. Of the 20 kings of Israel only Jeroboam I, Baasha, Omri, Ahaziah, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, and Menahem died natural deaths.

8. Among the people. Literally, "among the peoples," that is, among the other nations (see Esther 3:12). One of the chief reasons Israel apostatized was that they associated with the heathen and intermarried with them (see Ex. 34:12–16; Ps. 106:33–41).

A cake. Heb. *'ugah*, a circular, thin layer of bread, which was quickly baked upon ashes or heated stones (see 1 Kings 19:6). It in no way resembled the modern sweet cake;

it was more like a pancake. The *'ugah* needed to be quickly turned, else it would be burned on one side and be moist dough on the other; ruined by heat because not penetrated by heat. This is a graphic figure of spiritual inconsistency and inconstancy. The Israelites were worshipers of the Lord by profession, but engaged in the idolatries of the heathen.

The Lord chose Abraham and his descendants to be a holy nation unto Himself, for His own possession; and so He ordained that they should be, as Balaam prophesied, a people that "shall dwell alone" (Num. 23:9; see Ex. 19:4–6; Deut 14:2; 26:16–19; Ps. 135:4). Israel refused to follow this divine order, but mingled with the surrounding peoples, and so became a religious hybrid, as it were.

9. Strangers have devoured. This mixture of Israel with the heathen (v. 8) could result in nothing but trouble. Idolatrous foreign nations did devour Ephraim's strength. Syria reduced the armed forces of Jehoahaz to a humiliatingly small number (2 Kings 13:3–7). Menahem had to pay tribute to Assyria (2 Kings 15:17–20). In the reign of Pekah, Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, took Israelitish territory and carried the people captive to Assyria (2 Kings 15:29; 1 Chron. 5:26). All this took place before the kingdom ended with the fall of Samaria (2 Kings 17:5–18).

Gray hairs. A symbolic representation of Israel's declining national strength and the decay of her national importance.

Yet he knoweth not. This does not necessarily mean that Israel did not know she was in a decadent, failing condition. The facts within and without the nation were too evident. What they did not discern was that this decline was due to their apostasy. Israel was without the essential knowledge that should have been (see on ch. 4:6).

10. The pride of Israel. See on ch. 5:5.

For all this. These words give emphasis to the northern kingdom's stubbornness in not seeking the Lord's help. Instead, they made alliances and treaties with foreign nations.

11. Like a silly dove. That the dove was a simple, easily deceived fowl seems to have been a widespread opinion anciently. The stupidity of this bird is the subject of an Arab proverb, a proverb whose antiquity is unknown. The utter simplicity of a dove's flying right into the birdcatcher's net, without suspecting or observing it (see Prov. 7:23), is effectively used as a graphic illustration of Ephraim's folly. In asking Egypt and Assyria for help, Israel did not realize she was putting herself in a position to whet the territorial appetite of these imperial powers who sought to control Palestine. Thus Israel lost her national sovereignty and independence (see pp. 31–33).

To Egypt … to Assyria. The very position of Palestine exposed it to invasion by these two ancient empires. The two Israelitic nations stood on the highway connecting these two mighty powers. The much-coveted prize for which these powerful empires fought was this highway that connected the rich watersheds of the Nile and the Euphrates. The kingdoms of Israel and Judah were caught in this international counterplay and squeezed between the two rivals. In desperation, without spiritual trust in her God, Israel fatuously appealed first to the one and then to the other for a support that could only turn into a snare to her own national well-being.

12. When they shall go. To Egypt and Assyria for help (see on v. 11).

My net. The net of God's punishment (see Job 19:6; Ps. 66:11; Eze. 12:13; 32:3).

Bring them down. The prophet continues the use of the figure of birds and birdcatching. No matter how high or rapid their flight, the people cannot escape God. They will be humbled to the earth.

As their congregation. Hosea informs Ephraim that the judgments so often declared to the congregation of the children of Israel by the prophets would be severely executed upon the apostates.

13. Woe unto them! The people had departed from God, their only source of salvation (see Ps. 3:8; 46:1; 91:1–3; Jonah 2:8, 9).

Redeemed them. Evidently a reference to the exodus from Egypt.

Spoken lies against me. Here the prophet does not accuse the people of telling lies against mere men (see v. 3), but, more gravely, of lying against, or concerning, the Lord. In such lies may be included a denial of God's essential and sole deity, and also of His power or willingness either to protect or punish. Or the prophet may mean that these lies consist of a hypocritical drawing near to God with the lips while the heart is removed far from Him (see Isa. 29:13).

14. With their heart. The falsity of the people appeared in their works as well as in their words; for if they appealed to God at all for His aid, they did so insincerely. Israel's cry unto the Lord was not from the heart.

Howled. Heb. *yalal*, "to howl." This word imitates the sound of distress, as does the English word "wail." These howlings were because of the suffering of the people, and not because of real repentance and faith in the Lord (see on Ps. 18:41). True repentance is prompted, not by the dread of sin's punishment, but from a desire to be free from its exceeding sinfulness (see on Job 42:6).

They assemble. The picture here is of a group of idlers lounging around together, their principal interest being in food and drink. Several suggestions have been made as to the purpose of these gatherings. Some suggest that they were held ostensibly to perform some extra rite of worship to the Lord. Others have suggested that they were feasts in idol temples, held to propitiate the gods through food offerings. Or these gatherings may have been ordinary groups assembled near the city gates merely to exchange the latest rumors and gossip, and perhaps to discuss the sad state of national affairs. In any case, the chief concern of these people was to see that they had a plentiful supply of corn and wine to take care of their bodily wants. The LXX reads, "They cut themselves for oil and wine," meaning that they cut themselves fanatically in their worship before their graven images. This was a not uncommon pagan practice (see on 1 Kings 18:28).

15. I have bound. Literally, "I disciplined," "I chastised," or "I instructed." This passage is another reference to the Lord's goodness and Israel's subsequent ingratitude. In return for God's kindness to His people, they devised mischief against Him. They stubbornly kept to their own evil ways.

This verse, incidentally, reveals the force and freedom of the human will. The will has the power to resist the influence of God, and to turn what He designs for good into ill, because it is morally and spiritually sovereign and independent.

Their arms. Or, "their forearms." Arms are a symbol of strength (see Ps. 18:34; 144:1). So the Lord taught His people the source of strength and the secret of acquiring it. In spite of this they rebelled against Him.

Imagine mischief. The Hebrew word order gives the following emphasis: "Against me do they imagine mischief, against *Me,* their God!" Against the Lord, who had done so

much for them, and for whose glory they were created, they turned their back to follow idols, to render glory to these vanities (see Isa. 42:8).

16. Like a deceitful bow. Literally, "like a bow of slackness"; that is, a slack or loose bow. The rebellious attitude of Israel against God is figuratively represented here as a slack bow, which fails to send the arrow to the mark. The gradual spiritual decline of Israel, which caused them to miss their high destiny, did indeed resemble a bow whose cord, losing its elasticity, was unable to shoot the arrow to the object at which it was aimed (see Ps. 78:55–57).

The rage of their tongue. The words of the leaders, who taught the people to trust in Egypt rather than in God, who directed the people to idolatry and wickedness, would as a sword pierce their own breasts when their kingdom was destroyed and their people taken captive to a foreign land.

Their derision. As with Egypt (see on Isa. 30:3, 5) so it is with the world; it derides and mocks those who vainly trust in it, and who serve it in preference to God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PK 284
9 PK 280
10 PK 284
11 PK 280
14 4T 533

CHAPTER 8

1, 12 *Destruction is threatened for their impiety*, 5 *and idolatry*.

1. Set the trumpet. As a faithful watchman (see Eze. 33:1–3; Amos 3:6), Hosea here proclaims in urgent tones that judgment will quickly descend upon the people of God. The trumpet is to sound the alarm of the coming invasion.

Come as an eagle. This refers to the king of Assyria, Shalmaneser V, who was soon to invade Syria and Palestine (2 Kings 18:9), coming down from the north with the rapid, dread swoop of an eagle upon its prey (see Deut. 28:49).

Against the house. This does not refer to a temple in the northern kingdom, for such a temple, because of its idolatry, could not properly be termed the "house of the Lord." Nor does it refer to the Temple at Jerusalem, since this prophecy pertains to the northern kingdom of Israel. Hence it probably alludes to the people of Israel, on account of their covenant relation with the Lord (see on Num. 12:7). There remains, however, the possibility that "house of the Lord" is used here as equivalent to "house of God," or Bethel, which was one of the centers of calf worship in Israel (see on 1 Kings 12:29).

2. My God, we know thee. In the face of their disobedience to God's covenant and law, the people appeal earnestly to the Lord for help, urging the plea of their knowledge of Him. Tragically, however, it is a lifeless knowledge, which can offer no deliverance (see Matt. 25:11, 12).

3. Cast off. God replies by giving the reason why He can do nothing for Israel. They have rejected the good, their good God, their good law and covenant, the good things that God gives to those obeying Him. There is nothing left but their repudiation by God and their deliverance into the hands of their enemies. Such must ever be the attitude of the Lord toward those who merely appeal to God for salvation, but do not do the will and work of God required for salvation (see Matt. 7:21–23; 15:7, 8).

4. Set up kings. A reference to the godless usurpers who assassinated their royal predecessors to make way for themselves to seize the throne (see on ch. 7:7).

Not by me. That is, divine direction did not guide their conduct, which was disobedient, and so without God's sanction.

They made them idols. The apostate people had used their silver and gold to make idols, and to support idolatrous worship (see 1 Kings 12:26–28; Isa. 40:19; Jer. 10:1–4).

Be cut off. The result of this idolatry is that these images will themselves be destroyed in the ruin of the kingdom.

5. Thy calf. If the use of the singular, "calf," is significant, the reference is probably to the calf of Bethel, for that city seems to have been the chief center of Samaria's calf worship (see on Amos 7:13).

Hath cast thee off. Literally, "hath rejected." The Hebrew is somewhat uncertain, and various objects for the verb have been supplied, such as "thee" (KJV), "me," "them," etc., each one giving its own shade of meaning. However, the thought of the entire passage (vs. 5–7) is plain enough, for it shows that the nation was shortly to reap the fruitage of the calf worship that had been instituted by Jeroboam I (1 Kings 12:28). The LXX for this clause reads, "Cast off thy calf, O Samaria," making this an exhortation to Samaria and the entire country to cast aside the calf worship, which has brought down upon them the wrath of God.

Mine anger is kindled. The Lord is fully justified in His anger against the apostates. He asks how long it will be before they become innocent of such iniquity; or, as the LXX puts it, "How long will they be unable to purge themselves in Israel?"

6. From Israel was it also. Hosea here shows the folly of Israel's behavior. This opening clause indicates the origin of this particular idol worship, the calf image of gold. It arose in the northern kingdom under Jeroboam I (1 Kings 12:26–33), and continued under his successors. It was, indeed, "not God." This particular form of calf worship was not brought from a foreign country, as were the cults of Baal and Ashtoreth from the Sidonians, Chemosh from the Moabites, and Molech from the Ammonites.

The workman made it. It is the greatest folly to look upon any object that has been planned and fashioned by us as superior to us. Idolatry makes men go against the very principle of reason. They fashion the idol and yet account it their god; at the same time they, who are made and sustained by God, forsake Him. The essence of true religion is the worship of one's Creator; the folly of idolatry lies in the worship of what one's own hands have made (see v. 14).

7. Sown the wind. The reaping is ever the sure result of the sowing (Gal. 6:7, 8). Israel's idolatry can have only one issue, divine punishment. The wind pictures the emptiness and vanity of Israel's idolatrous course; the whirlwind, consequent destruction. Whatever becomes our idol, whatever robs God of His rightful place in the heart, will assuredly return to us a harvest of regret and distress. We shall be paid back in the hard coin of our own moral and spiritual mintage (see Isa. 2:17–21; Eze. 14:1–5).

It hath no stalk. Literally, "It has no standing grain." Still carrying on the figure of the wind, when the seed sown is wind, the prophet indicates that the harvest reaped is failure, futility, even destruction; for the seed sown brings forth no standing grain, the bud yields no "meal."

If so be it yield. If by any chance any grain is harvested, the invasion of rapacious foreigners will be sure to swallow it up. Thus in striking fashion does the prophet show that the divine blight falls inescapably on all wicked deeds (see Prov. 14:11, 12).

8. Israel is swallowed up. This includes not only the produce of the field but the people themselves.

As a vessel. As a result of Israel's humiliating defeat, her reputation suffered so sorely that she became despised and dishonored as a worthless utensil, to be cast away as wholly unfit for use (see on Jer. 22:28).

9. A wild ass. This animal, with his willful and ungovernable ways, is used here to portray the behavior and disposition of Ephraim in turning to Assyria and in participating in pagan and idolatrous practices.

Hath hired lovers. These are the Assyrians with whom, as a wanton harlot, Israel had illicit relations, and to whom she shamelessly gave presents (payment of tribute).

10. Sorrow a little. If "a little" is a time expression for "in a little while," the meaning would be that before long Israel would feel the painful effects of her resorting to Assyria. Some believe that "little" is here used in an ironic sense: thus heavy as was the tribute imposed upon Israel and grievous to be borne, it would be light in comparison with the sorrow they would have to endure when the whole nation was carried into captivity.

The burden. A reference to the oppression and exactions imposed upon Israel by the cruel and rapacious Assyrians.

11. Made many altars. See on ch. 10:1. Instead of the one place with its altar that God had appointed (see Deut. 12:1–14), Israel multiplied altars contrary to the express command of God. They were for the worship of idols, such as the calves, the Baals (see on Hosea 2:17), and other heathen idols. Their location was on every high hill and place that pleased the people (see on ch. 4:13).

12. The great things. Or, "the ten thousands." Inasmuch as Israel was favored, as no other people was, with the revelation of God's will in a written law, there was no excuse for her apostasy. The divine instructions were too numerous, too detailed, too plain, and too inclusive for that.

Counted as a strange thing. Although God's directions and instructions were full and adequate, they became foreign to the inclinations of the chosen people, and so God's teachings went unheeded.

In view of the free access all have to God's Word today in all lands and in all languages, we who live in a world needier, more troubled, and more hostile than that of Israel's day, will find that we have no excuse if we neglect the Sacred Scriptures and their message (see Heb. 2:1–3).

13. Eat it. Israel's sacrifices to God were not acceptable to Him because they were not presented in the true spirit of devotion (see on Isa. 66:3).

Visit. That is, for the purpose of punishment (see on Ps. 8:4; 59:5).

They shall return to Egypt. The limit of God's patience has been reached because of the fullness of their iniquity. The time of their punishment is here. The God who had delivered their fathers out of the bondage of Egypt will now send their children to a similar or worse fate than that of Egypt. No actual return to Egypt is meant here; the term "Egypt" is used merely as a symbol of bondage.

14. Israel hath forgotten. Hosea traces Israel's sinfulness, with its baleful consequences, to its source, forgetfulness of God. This forgetfulness of the Lord led to idolatry, and the building of heathen temples that followed.

I will send a fire. This prediction was fulfilled when Sennacherib took the fenced cities of Judah (2 Kings 18:13), and also later when Nebuchadnezzar captured and burned Jerusalem (see 2 Kings 25:8, 9; 2 Chron. 36:19; Ps. 74:3–8; Jer. 17:27).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 GC 310
3 PK 280
4 PK 279
5, 6 PK 285
7 MYP 87; 1T 269
12 COL 306; Ed 127; PK 296

CHAPTER 9

[2]

The distress and captivity of Israel for their sins and idolatry.

1. Rejoice not. The first half of this chapter, vs. 1–9, presents a warning against any feeling of false security arising from a period of temporary prosperity. Israel under Jeroboam II was prosperous (see on ch. 2:8), and after the departure of Tiglath-pileser III, king of Assyria (2 Kings 15:19; see on 1 Chron. 5:26), the land had peace under Menahem. Until Tiglath-pileser invaded Israel even Pekah was somewhat strong, for in his alliance with Rezin of Syria he was an object of fear to Judah (2 Kings 16:5, 6).

Loved a reward. This explains the reason for their joy. The blessings of the harvest were considered to be the rewards for their idol worship (see Jer. 44:17, 18). Little wonder that Hosea refers to these blessings as the hire of a harlot, and not as evidences of the Lord's favor!

2. Shall not feed them. Though Israel exults over her harvest blessings, the people would be unable to enjoy the abundant produce of their fields, because they would be carried away captive to Assyria, as apparently is implied in v. 3. When God's blessings are turned to the purposes of sin, in mercy He takes them away (see PK 21).

3. In the Lord's land. That is, in Palestine (see Ps. 85:1; Joel 2:18), which God intended should be His people's permanent possession. Through their sin and apostasy, however, they were to lose it. It was theirs only on the basis of the covenant relationship. Now that they had renounced the covenant (Hosea 6:7; 8:1; 9:1), it was fitting that they should be removed from the land (see ch. 9:15, 17; cf. on ch. 2:5, 9).

Return to Egypt. See on ch. 8:13.

Eat unclean things. In the land of their captivity the people would eat that which was unclean, since they could not readily conform to the requirements of the law forbidding the eating of certain animals (see Lev. 11; Eze. 4:13).

Bread of mourners. This was food eaten at a funeral meal by those mourning for the dead. Any such food was legally unclean because a corpse ceremonially defiled for seven days the dwelling where it was and all who entered therein (see on Num. 19:14).

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[2]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ho 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Therefore, those who ate this food would be ceremonially unclean. Thus it would be with the captives in the polluted land of their exile.

Bread for their soul. The clause reads literally, "for their bread [is] for their soul"; that is, "for themselves" (see on Ps. 16:10). All their food would be needed to nourish their lives. It would not be brought to the house of the Lord as an offering.

5. What will ye do? Off in a strange land the people would feel keenly the loss of their yearly celebrations, their annual feasts, and religious solemnities (see on ch. 2:11).

6. They are gone. The prophet pictures Israel's exile in the land of captivity as an event that has already taken place. The possession and occupancy of "the Lord's land" (see on v. 3) was an evidence of the enjoyment of the Lord's love. Therefore, since the people's iniquity brought upon them divine disfavor, expulsion from their homeland was only to be expected.

Because of destruction. This refers to the desolation and wasting of their own country, from which "they are gone," that is, from which they have been taken.

Egypt. Egypt is evidently still used in a figurative sense, indicating that the land of their punishment will be a second land of bondage (see on ch. 8:13). Far from their native land they shall be gathered together and doomed to be buried.

The pleasant places. Since "places" is a supplied word, it might be better to supply a more general word, such as "things" (RSV). Various interpretations of what these "pleasant things" refer to have been suggested, such as silver idols, silver valuables, or houses ornamented and containing silver. The context favors the last interpretation. The ornamented homes of the people of Israel would become utterly desolate and deserted so that nettles and thorns would possess them.

Tabernacles. Here used figuratively to denote houses.

7. The days of visitation. Evidently the false prophets of Hosea's day, like those of other days, had scoffed at the idea that the days of God's wrath would come, assuring the people that they need have no fear (see Jer. 14:13–15; Eze. 13:9, 10; Amos 6:3). Unfortunately, many believed and desired this deceptive doctrine (see Isa. 30:8–14). But God's purpose prevails; the day of divine visitation and recompense is here. Israel cannot avoid knowing it, for what they would not believe, they will now experience.

The spiritual man. Literally, "the man of the spirit"; that is, the man who has a spirit. Some understand this reference to mean that the prophet and the man of the spirit are the false prophets (see on v. 8) who claimed divine inspiration and flattered Israel with false hopes and assurances of security and safety (see Jer. 8:11). Bitter experience would teach Israel the folly of those who deluded the people by their false predictions. It seems that whenever God raises up a true prophet, Satan sends forth false prophets. Moses had to contend with the magicians of Egypt and with Balaam (Ex. 7:10, 11; 8:6, 7; Num. 22–24). Elijah at Mt. Carmel had to meet the 450 prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18). Micaiah at Samaria had to meet another 400 (1 Kings 22:6–23). Such false prophets would arise even until the closing days of the earth's history (see Matt. 24:11, 24).

Others understand this reference to mean that the prophet and the man of the spirit are the true prophets, whom the people called fools and madmen, and contemptuously treated as such, despising and persecuting them. Worldly-minded men have ever regarded God's true prophets as mad, as did Festus when dealing with the apostle Paul (Acts 26:24); and Jehu's captains when Elisha sent the young prophet to anoint Jehu as king (2 Kings 9:1–

11); and Shemaiah when he denounced Jeremiah (Jer. 29:24–29). Was not our Lord declared "mad" by the Jews of His day (John 10:19–21)?

Great hatred. Evidently the hatred of the apostates, either against their fellows, against their God, or against the Lord's prophets. In his downward path of sin the transgressor first neglects God, then he willfully disobeys God. Finally, when he falls under God's chastisement because of his willful course, he hates his Maker.

8. The watchman. If we consider the prophet and the spiritual man (see on v. 7) to be true prophets at whom the people sneered and scoffed as being fools and fanatics, Hosea is here declaring that his God is the God of these watchmen. And regardless of how they were treated, as God's watchmen (see Eze. 3:16–21; 33:7–9), the Lord would protect them.

With my God. The word "with" here is meaningful. If the false prophet was *with* the people to curry their favor and condone their sinful ways, the true prophet was at all times *with* the Lord, to receive His help and direction, *with* Him in communion, *with* Him to carry out the divine will in the face of all opposition. In a word, it was his high privilege to be a member of that select group who are "workers together with him" (2 Cor. 6:1). By the change of one vowel of the traditional spelling (see Vol. I, pp. 25, 26), this phrase might be translated: "the people of my God."

Snare of a fowler. A figure referring to the work of the false prophet, who traps the people into destruction by his deception (see Isa. 30:8–13). This seems to indicate that the "prophet" (see on v. 7) mentioned previously may be a false prophet rather than a true one.

Hatred. Evidently the hatred against God and His people, which idolatry fostered. It is pictured as centered in the idol temple, and actively represented by the false prophet.

House of his God. The false prophet would be connected with an idol temple, perhaps the one at Bethel (see on ch. 8:1). Note the contrast between "his God" and "my God," mentioned by Hosea earlier in the verse.

9. Days of Gibeah. To show the people of the northern kingdom to what depths of corruption they have fallen, Hosea introduces an allusion to Gibeah. This is perhaps a reference to the abominable and shameful abuse of the Levite's concubine by the men of Gibeah, one of the foul incidents in the period of the Judges (see Judges 19).

Remember their iniquity. Just as the sin of Gibeah was bloodily avenged by the near annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin—although for a time it seemed that God had overlooked the sinners' guilt and permitted Benjamin to be victorious over the other tribes (see Judges 20)—so will it be with the northern kingdom. They will not escape the divine visitation of wrath in their exile, though for many years it would seem that their transgressions had been overlooked by God.

Visit. That is, "punish" (see Hosea 8:13; see on Ps. 8:4; 59:5).

10. Like grapes. To find grapes and firstripe figs in a wild and uncultivated wilderness is particularly delightful. The Lord expresses the great joy He had toward Israel of old when He took them to Himself (Deut. 32:10).

Baal-peor. A reference to the terrible spiritual and literal adultery that Moab enticed Israel to commit, an enticement suggested by the apostate Balaam (see Num. 25:1–5).

Separated themselves. From the Heb. *nazar*, which, in the form here found, means "to dedicate oneself." *Nazar* is the root of *nazir*, Nazirite (see on Num. 6:2).

That shame. The Moabitish maidens sacrificed their virginity to this revolting and filthy god; and in this iniquitous business the Israelites, who were to be separated unto God and His service, were involved (Num. 25:6–9). In contrast to the Nazirites, who separated themselves from that which would interfere with their consecration *unto* God (see Num. 6), these transgressors separated themselves from God and His ways and joined themselves *unto* shame, thus becoming, so to speak, "Nazirites of shame" (see above under "Separated themselves").

According as they loved. Or, "like that which they loved." Men tend to become in character like the object of their worship (see on Ps. 115:8). This was true of Israel. Having become degenerate in morals and character, they were regarded by God as being abominable, like the heathen abominations they worshiped.

11. As for Ephraim. After drawing the parallel between Israel's present evil and those shameful ones of the past, Gibeah and Baal-peor (vs. 9, 10), Hosea passes on to announce the deserved punishment about to fall upon the northern kingdom.

Their glory. The meaning of the word Ephraim is "double fruitfulness" (see on Gen. 41:52). Jacob's blessing upon Ephraim predicted his being greater in number than his brother Manasseh (Gen. 48:14–20), which blessing was later affirmed by Moses (Deut. 33:17). It is very likely, therefore, that the glory spoken of here refers to the increase in Ephraim's population. As a result of the sword of the coming invader, there would be a marked lessening in the number of the inhabitants of Ephraim.

12. Yea, woe also. God's departure from His people was the cause of all their woe (see Deut. 31:16–18). Since Israel had parted from God (Hosea 7:13), there was nothing left for God but to part from them (see 2 Chron. 15:1, 2).

13. Ephraim. The Hebrew of the first half of this verse is somewhat obscure. The LXX for this clause reads, "Ephraim, as I saw, gave their children for a prey."

Murderer. Probably no ancient nation was more cruel to a conquered foe than were the Assyrians (see ch. 10:14).

14. What wilt thou give? The prophet concurs with the punishment assigned.

15. In Gilgal. See on ch. 4:15.

I hated them. It is a fearful thing when our sins provoke God's hatred, and severe will be those judgments which are the effects of this hatred. However, we may rest assured that although God hates the sin, He still loves the sinner (SC 54). If the sinner will not separate himself from his iniquity, he must someday reckon with the divine abhorrence of evil that brings the final destruction of sin. Ephraim's sin was no common sin, no sin of ignorance. It was a sin against the full light of God's will and therefore worthy of the greater condemnation (see Luke 12:47, 48).

Mine house. Compare "my land" (see on v. 3).

Love them no more. This of course applies only to the nation as a whole. It does not refer to individuals, many of whom remained true to the Lord and His ways. There were many such in Israel, and God loved them, as He always has and will (see 1 Kings 19:18; 2 Chron. 16:9; Rom. 8:35–39; PK 292).

All their princes. This shows how utterly hopeless the spiritual condition of the northern kingdom was, for not one of its kings did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. How tragic that this nation, which should have been a light to the Gentiles (see Isa. 49:6), became a land of spiritual darkness. For further comment see pp. 30–33.

16. Ephraim is smitten. Though Israel was set as a pleasant plant in the garden of God's love, the disease of apostasy has smitten its root, and it has withered. When the root is dried up there can be no hope of fruit. Ephraim's tree, therefore, that unless they first forsake Him for ways of God, will produce nothing but leaves, and so merit the divine judgment (see Matt. 21:18, 19).

17. My God. See on v. 8. God is not the God of those who, by their disobedience, depart from Him. God never forsakes men unless they first forsake Him for ways of their own choosing (see on v. 12).

Wanderers. Centuries before, God had forewarned Israel that this would be their fate if they departed from the Lord (see Deut. 28:63–65). The ten tribes, as a nation, were not to return, but would be "wanderers among the nations" until the end of time (see PK 298). How strikingly this divine prediction has been fulfilled is amply seen in the history of the Jews from Hosea's day to the present. They have gone from nation to nation, a people without a country. However, this prophecy does not say that members of the ten tribes could not return from captivity as individuals, for they could, and some of them did, with the returning captives of Judah, after Judah's term of exile (see on Hosea 1:11).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

7 PK 285
9 PK 282
17 PK 280, 298

CHAPTER 10

Israel is reproved and threatened for their impiety and idolatry.

1. Empty vine. In the Scriptures, God's people are frequently compared to a vine (Ps. 80:8; Isa. 5:1–7; Jer. 2:21; Matt. 21:33–41). The vine depicted here is not without fruit, but the fruit produced is for itself. From the standpoint of the owner the vine may be called "empty," for he receives nothing from it. So with Israel. The Lord did not receive the fruit due Him from the nation for which He had done so much (see on Isa. 5:1–7).

Bringeth forth fruit. While in name and profession the people of Israel were the people of God, in practice they did not yield the fruits of righteousness. They deserved the same judgment Jesus placed upon the barren fig tree (see Matt. 21:18, 19).

Unto himself. Or, "for himself." Few men can stand prosperity. Instead of being led by God's goodness and benefits to a sincere repentance of sin and a closer walk with their Maker, they are prone to forget Him. The fruits of their blessings are selfishly kept for self and are not given back to Him. Thus God is often defrauded of the fruits men owe Him. It is a great abuse of God's goodness to refuse to share our blessings with others. See pp. 32, 33.

Increased the altars. The Hebrew word translated "increased" comes from the same root as does the word translated "multitude." The thought is that precisely according to the increase of their blessings was the increase of their apostasy. This presents in reality what has just been given in symbols, the large growth of Israel's apostasy. The increase of population and material prosperity (see on ch. 2:8; PK 286) resulted in an increase in the number of idolatrous altars.

Images. Heb. *maṣṣeboth*, "pillars" (see on Hosea 3:4; cf. 1 Kings 14:23).

2. Their heart. Israel added the service of idols to that of the Lord (see 2 Kings 17:32, 33,41), and this half worship of Himself God could not tolerate (see Matt. 6:24). It is only

when we come to God with the whole heart that He can do for us what He wills (see Prov. 23:26; Jer. 29:11–14).

Divided. Or, "smooth," "slippery."

Break down. A single word in Hebrew meaning literally, "to break the neck of," a word commonly used in a ritualistic sense (see Ex. 13:13; 34:20; Deut. 21:4, 6). In these words Hosea declares that the means of sinning shall be taken from the transgressors and destroyed, their altars broken down and their images spoiled. The "he" in this third clause of the verse is emphatic: "*He* [the Lord Himself] shall break down their altars."

3. Now. Either when the people see the destruction before their eyes or when they are in captivity.

No king. As a result of their rejection of the Lord and its accompanying chastisements, Israel would be brought to see and feel that the kings appointed through their own self-will (see on ch. 8:4) would be unable to protect or help them (see on ch. 3:4).

This may also refer to Israel's rejection of the Lord in His double capacity as their God and as their King. This rejection, which began to some extent with the choosing of Saul (see 1 Sam. 8:7), ultimately resulted in spiritual disaster and material distress, and finally in utter ruin.

4. Swearing falsely. Israel's faithlessness in Hosea's day was pronounced in several respects: (1) forsaking the Lord by idolatry, (2) disloyalty to their sovereign, and (3) falsehood and dishonor in dealing with their fellow men in general. After entering into an agreement with the Assyrian king Shalmaneser V, they deceitfully made a covenant with So, king of Egypt (see 2 Kings 17:4). Thus, at one and the same time they acted as covenant breakers and they disobeyed God's command forbidding covenants with foreigners (see Ex. 23:32; 34:12; Deut. 7:2), and so were untrue to men and untrue to God.

Judgment springeth up. Or, literally, 'judgment [or, justice] sprouts," or "judgment blossoms." Some suggest that "judgment" refers to the punishment that God is going to visit upon the wicked nation, punishment that would be as bitter and deadly as hemlock. However, the context seems to indicate that "judgment" here refers to that official "justice" in the land which was a perversion and a mockery of true justice (see Amos 5:7; 6:12). This perverted judgment is like the bitter herb, which springs up so readily and abundantly.

Hemlock. Heb. *ro'sh*, "a bitter and poisonous herb" (see on Ps. 69:21). The word is also used for the poison of serpents (Deut. 32:33; Job 20:16).

5. Samaria. The capital and leading city of the northern kingdom.

Calves. Heb. *'egloth*, "young cows," or "heifers." Elsewhere in Hosea the idolatrous calves are designated by the Hebrew masculine form. Probably the word is in the feminine gender for the purpose of expressing contempt for the images that Jeroboam I set up. The use of the feminine form may also imply the weakness of these gods; for, instead of these calves helping the people, the people were afraid that these calves would be taken away captive. Rather than the plural, the LXX has the singular, "calf," which agrees better with the singular pronoun "it" (vs. 5, 6).

Beth-aven. Literally, "the house of evil power," or "the house of wickedness" (see on ch. 4:15). Bethel, "the house of God," once a place of sacred memory because of its

association with the patriarch Jacob, later became one of the two centers of idolatrous calf worship (1 Kings 12:26–33).

Priests. Heb. *kemarim*, a word occurring elsewhere in the OT only in 2 Kings 23:5, where it is translated "idolatrous priests," and in Zeph. 1:4, where it is transliterated "Chemarims."

6. Also carried. This verse explains the preceding verse. Israel's national god, the calf, will be carried to Assyria as one of the spoils of war. In ancient times victory over a nation was counted as a victory over its gods (see 1 Kings 20:23, 28; 2 Kings 18:28–35).

King Jareb. See on ch. 5:13. There is no specific reference to the fulfillment of this prophecy of the carrying away into Assyria of this golden calf, but we may rest assured that the Assyrians would not permit such an object of value to remain unmolested in Bethel.

Counsel. Perhaps a reference to the evil policy of Jeroboam I that had as its purpose the separation of Israel from Judah (see 1 Kings 12:26–30).

7. Foam. Heb. *qeṣeph*, "a bough snapped off" (see Matt. 15:13). The LXX reads "a twig." The figure emphasizes the lightness, instability, and helplessness of the king in whom the people trusted.

8. Aven. Most likely this is to be understood as Beth-aven, probably Bethel (see on ch. 4:15). Some, however, take these high places of "Aven" to indicate high places "of wickedness" (the Heb. *'awen* means wickedness) where unlawful sacrifices were offered to strange gods. By sacrificing to the Lord on these high places instead of in Jerusalem, the only place for religious service according to the law (see Deut. 12:1–14), the people began their departure from God. Later, because of increasing apostasy, these high places witnessed the most abominable idolatries and shamefully sinful practices (see on Hosea 4:13).

Thorn. A striking picture of total desolation.

Cover us. So overwhelmed will the people be with distress and dismay, that in despair and desperation they will desire prompt death. Rather than behold further such heart-rending scenes, rather than endure any longer such calamities, they prefer being buried under mountains or hills.

Significantly, our Lord used similar words in predicting the miseries connected with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70 (Luke 23:30), as also did John in picturing men's despair at the end of the world (Rev. 6:16, 17). Is it not infinitely better to pray to Jesus now to "cover" our transgressions with the blood of His atonement than through neglect of this to have to cry to the mountains and hills at last to fall on us and cover us? Our sincere prayers to Jesus now will surely be heard, but the prayers to the mountains and hills then will be in vain.

9. Gibeah. See on ch. 9:9. This sin of Gibeah had become proverbial.

10. I should chastise them. On the purpose of the Captivity see pp. 31, 568.

Gathered. The instruments of God's punishment will be the foreign invaders (see on Isa. 7:20). Just as the other tribes were gathered against the tribe of Benjamin at Gibeah to destroy it, so now against the ten tribes will be gathered divers peoples and nations to destroy Israel. The numbers gathered against Israel will be as overwhelming as that of all the tribes against the one small tribe of Benjamin (see Judges 20).

Two furrows. According to Masoretic tradition, the LXX, Syriac, and the Vulgate, this should read "two transgressions." Israel's punishment is bound to her transgressions, and like yoked animals, the people will have to drag this punishment after them. God's people had thrown off the light and easy yoke of God (see on Matt. 11:29, 30), and bound themselves in their own ways of sin. In that sin destruction would overtake them.

11. Heifer. Heb. *'eglah* (see on v. 5). Ephraim is here likened to a heifer trained to tread out corn. Oxen were employed in ancient (and modern) times in threshing grain, either by treading with their feet or by drawing a threshing sledge or cart over it. Also they were not muzzled (see Deut. 25:4), so were left free to snatch at times a mouthful of corn. Such was Israel's history. She had been placed in the Promised Land in easy, comfortable circumstances, like a heifer threshing, that was allowed to eat at pleasure. Tragically, these material comforts that should have drawn her close to her Creator, made her sinfully self-sufficient and rebellious (see on Deut. 32:15).

Fair neck. A change has come; the Assyrian yoke is about to be placed upon Israel's fair neck.

Make Ephraim to ride. That is, use Ephraim for riding or for pulling a vehicle.

Plow. Burdensome and distasteful labor will now be imposed. Judah, because of her sins, also is to share the toil, having to do the heavy work of plowing; and Jacob, probably used here in the sense of the ten northern tribes, will break the clods. Once free, Ephraim is now subdued and made to wear the yoke of hard service.

12. Sow … in righteousness. Literally, "for righteousness," or "to righteousness"; Israel is to sow seed from which righteousness is to spring forth. The admonition here given again reflects the meaning of the name Jezreel (see on chs. 1:4; 2:23).

Reap. The heifer (v. 11) illustrates the condition into which Israel had come because of sin; here the prophet pictures what the Lord desires Israel to be through the obedience of faith. Using figures drawn from agricultural life (vs. 12, 13), Hosea presents the call to repentance and to the reformation that true repentance brings. God assures His people that if they will conform their lives to His will, and treat their fellows justly, they shall receive their reward (see Ps. 19:11; Prov. 11:18), a reward far greater than the total of the good deeds they might do, just as the farmer who sows a bushel of wheat reaps from it many more bushels in the harvest (see Mark 10:28–30). Even though we may sow the seed of righteousness in tears, the comforting promise remains that we shall reap in joy (see Ps. 126:5, 6).

Mercy. Heb. *chesed* (see Additional Note on Psalm 36). Compare the meaning of the name Lo-ruhamah (see on Hosea 1:6; 2:23).

Break up. This is a divine plea for a reformation in life, for the rooting out of the weeds of sin, as the farmer runs his plow through the fallow, uncultivated field and breaks it up that the ground may be ready for the sowing of the seed. Israel is urged to purge out all apostasy in worship, all iniquity in living, and to return to the Lord with sincerity of heart. Too long had Ephraim's land lain waste and wild in sin. This must now give way to divine cultivation for the rooting out of the weeds and roots of national, social, and individual evils. Spiritual renewal and radical religious reform are imperative.

This strong plea indicates that the door of mercy was still open for possible repentance on the part of Israel. However, the sad fact remained that the nation as a whole was so hardened in sin that this plea would be in vain (see on ch. 4:17).

Nevertheless, the straight messages of Hosea were not wholly in vain, for they probably helped many an individual soul to remain true in this time of crisis (see PK 292).

Seek the Lord. Should they do so, God would again own them as His people (see on chs. 1:9; 2:23).

Rain righteousness. See on Isa. 45:8.

13. Ye have plowed wickedness. Used here in the sense of "ye have sowed wickedness." The former conduct of the people of Israel had been the opposite of that which they are now exhorted to display (see v. 12). The evil they sowed had already yielded the inexorable harvest of iniquity (see Job 4:8; Prov. 22:8). Their confidence in the wisdom of their own ways betrayed them into disaster and war (see Prov. 14:12).

Fruit of lies. Through hypocrisy and idolatry Israel had lied against God. Now the fruit of this dishonesty would be disillusionment, the smoke and ashes of sheer disappointment and nothingness.

In thy way. Israel forsook God's way of righteousness to follow their own ways of iniquity. By trusting in the vain help of Egypt and Assyria they made flesh their arm, and so departed from the Lord (see on Jer. 17:5).

14. Tumult. The harvest is ready, the tumult of war and destruction is on its way.

Shalman. Considered variously to be a shortened form of Shalmaneser V, king of Assyria; a reference to Shallum, who murdered Zachariah the son of Jeroboam II and ruled over Israel for only one month, and in turn was murdered by his successor (see 2 Kings 15:8–15); or Salamanu, a Moabite king.

Beth-arbel. Heb. *beth 'arebe'l*, "the house of Arebel." This may have been Arbela (modern *Irbid*), mentioned in 1 Macc. 9:2, in Galilee, in the tribe of Naphtali, or it may have been another *Irbid* east of Jordan. Interestingly enough, the LXX reads "the house of Jeroboam," which would be a reference to the murder of Zachariah by Shallum, which brought to an end the family of Jeroboam II.

Dashed in pieces. The Assyrians were known to be very cruel in war (see on ch. 9:13).

15. Beth-el. See on ch. 4:15. The impending captivity was traceable to the iniquities of the people. As the principal place of calf worship, Bethel was the sinful reason for many of their approaching calamities.

Morning. As the morning speedily ushers out the stars of night, so the king (most likely Hoshea, the last king of Israel) would be speedily cut off, and the northern kingdom quickly come to its end.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AA 15; COL 290; MB 54; PK 19
5, 6 PK 285
12 COL 56; CT 508; Ev 113, 634; PK 282; RC 63; 6T 420; 9T 62
13–15 PK 280

CHAPTER 11

1 *The ingratitude of Israel unto God for his benefits*. 5 *His judgment*. 8 *God's mercy toward them*.

1. Child. Verses 1–4 of this chapter give an account of the benefits the people of Israel had received from the Lord from the time of the Exodus, and of Israel's subsequent ingratitude for these blessings. God had every reason to be provoked against Israel

because of their attitude toward the love and care He bestowed upon them, from their infancy, so to speak (see Eze. 16:1–8; PK 312). His interest in them and for them was indeed that of a father toward his son, an interest no other nation shared to the same extent (see Deut. 7:6–8). Hosea refers to this relationship, beginning at the time Moses gave the Lord's message to Pharaoh to let His people go (see on Ex. 4:22, 23). Hosea 11:1 shows that the one chief design of the Bible is to recommend to sinners the goodness and grace of God (see 8T 275). "The whole Scripture," says Luther, "aims especially at this, that we doubt not, but certainly hope, trust, and believe that God is gracious, merciful and longsuffering."

Called my son. The experience of Israel's deliverance from Egypt was declared by the Gospel writer Matthew, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to be a figure or prophecy of the experience of the child Jesus in Egypt and His return to Palestine (see on Matt. 2:15). Although Matthew's reference may not be considered as a verbatim quotation of either the Hebrew or the LXX of Hosea 11:1, there is no doubt that the Gospel writer had this comparison of experiences in mind.

2. They called. Probably a reference to the various prophets and other messengers whom God employed to make known His will to the people.

They went from them. Refusing to acknowledge the call of God, Israel turned to idolatry, especially to Baalim, the various representations of the god Baal (see ch. 2:17).

3. By their arms. This is a beautiful picture of God's loving care of Ephraim. Just as a fond parent teaches a child to walk, taking it up by the arms when it stumbles or falls, so the Lord had taught His son Israel (see Deut. 1:31; 33:27; Jer. 31:32). Just as a loving father patiently bears with a child who has not yet come to the age of discretion, so had the Lord borne patiently with His undeveloped people, people who were ignorant of the spiritual mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (see Deut. 32:10).

Healed. This appears to be an allusion to Ex. 15:26 (see also Isa. 57:18).

4. Cords. This is a further picture of the Lord's fatherly guidance of Israel (see Jer. 31:3).

Bands of love. A significant expression, showing that these bands are far different from those which men employ in taming wild animals. The lower animals must sometimes be broken into useful labor with a degree of violence; but God does not so draw men. He uses neither hard cords nor iron bands, but draws us by rational means, courting our intelligence and appealing to our affections (see on Isa. 1:18). God draws us in a manner suitable to the dignity of our nature, as those made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27). In working for souls we should ever follow this method of love (see 1 Cor. 9:19–23; 1 Thess. 2:7, 8; 3:12; Heb. 5:2). Christ drew us with the cords of a man when He became man, and lived and sacrificed Himself for our good (see John 12:32; Acts 10:38). One of the reasons the Son of God became *man* was to draw *men* with the cords of sympathy, by partaking of a common nature with them.

Meat. Anything edible, that is, food in general, not necessarily flesh. The Lord granted to Israel, in spite of their frequent faithless acts, His saving mercy and tender compassion, along with an abundant sustenance (see Ps. 23:5). This made all the more inexcusable their resorting to other gods to secure greater bounties.

5. Into the land of Egypt. Having been tributary to Assyria since the time of Menahem (2 Kings 15:17–20), Israel revolted and sought help from Egypt (2 Kings 17:1–4). However, no help would be permitted to come from Egypt; Israel would be compelled

to submit to the yoke of Assyria. The Assyrian bondage would be a chastisement upon them for their unrepented sins.

6. Sword. There will be no escaping the invasion and its effects.

Branches. Literally, "sticks," "staves," or "shoots." Evidently the "branches" were something to aid in the defense of the cities themselves, such as the bars of the city gates. Or "branches" may be understood figuratively of the frontier fortresses, or the nearby villages, related to the cities as shoots to a tree.

Counsels. The cause of all these coming afflictions was the nation's evil counsels, which led the people into transgression and apostasy (see Ps. 5:10).

7. My people. How expressively this shows that notwithstanding all Israel's guilt in persistent backsliding, the nation was still "my people" to God!

Called them. Though Israel is called upward to fellowship with the Most High, it seemed as though no one cared to have this exalted experience. Corruption was so deep rooted in Israel that the people generally gave no response to the prophets' pleas for this higher higher spiritual life.

8. Give thee up. The thought of v. 8 represents a transition from dire predictions of severe chastisement to comforting promises of mercy. Frequently in Hosea's prophecy threats and promises alternate, and sometimes commingle. Although Ephraim merited complete destruction because of its iniquities, the Lord, because of His enduring love and mercy, continued to strive for repentance and reformation on the part of His people (see Jer. 31:20).

Zeboim. Admah and Zeboim were among the cities of the plain that were destroyed by God (Gen. 14:8; Deut. 29:23). Although Israel had been as guilty and deserving of wrath as these cities (see Matt. 11:23, 24), God expresses His reluctance to deliver the northern kingdom into the hands of its enemies or to give it over to destruction.

My repentings. See on Num. 23:19.

9. Not execute. The prophet paints a glorious picture of the working of divine love. The Lord will not execute the burning heat of His wrath, nor destroy Ephraim utterly. If God's love in the beginning of His interest in Israel was something great and exalted (see vs. 1–4), it is something greater now, as being in the form of compassion (vs. 8, 9), in which the Lord refuses to give up His people, altogether unworthy as they had become of the love He had shown them.

Destroy Ephraim. While man may punish to destroy, God punishes to correct and amend (see Jer. 29:11). God's anger issues in a course very different from that of men. They are intent upon vengeance; He upon reconciliation.

I am God. This is the basic reason for the divine mercy just expressed—God's inherently holy character that cannot but honor and fulfill His covenant of everlasting love with Israel. He is God, and so must be measured by the divine standard of that love (see Rom. 8:37–39; 1 John 4:16), and not by man's vengeful standard.

The Holy One. This explains why God punishes iniquity and yet continues to show mercy. The holiness that cannot tolerate the guilty is also the holiness of truth and faithfulness.

Into the city. These words signify that God would not come as an enemy to destroy utterly, as He had come to the cities of the plain of Sodom (v. 8).

10. Roar like a lion. A figure denoting both the loudness of the call and the awful majesty of the Lord when thus summoning His people to return. This roaring may also

mean His authoritative commands to Israel's enemies when God calls His people back from their captivity. The majestic and commanding voice of the Lord to those who work iniquity, although full of love (Rom. 2:4), is also full of solemn potentiality of judgment. God calls sinners not only to flee to His mercy but also to flee from the wrath to come (see Matt. 3:7, 8).

11. As a bird. Evidently a reference to the return of the Jews after the 70 years' captivity (see Jer. 29:10). Egypt and Assyria are here mentioned specifically because the Jews experienced subjection and oppression in both these countries.

12. Compasseth. The prophet presents the open idolatry of Israel in contrast to the spiritual condition of the southern kingdom of Judah, which was outwardly loyal to the Lord.

Ruleth. Or, "roams." Possibly this indicates that Judah is still taking a vacillating, restlessly wandering course in its relation to the Lord, the faithful Holy One.

For cometh on the status of Judah at the time the northern kingdom of Israel fell see v. 2; see on ch. 4:15; see p. 31.

This last verse of ch. 11 is the first verse of ch. 12 in the Hebrew Bible.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PK 312; 8T 275
2–7 8T 276
3 PK 296
4 DA 480; Ev 211
7 PK 281
8 COL 235; TM 245
8, 9 COL 218; 8T 276
10, 11 8T 277

CHAPTER 12

1 *A reproof of Ephraim, Judah, and Jacob*. 3 *By former favours he exhorteth to repentance*. 7 *Ephraim's sins provoke God*.

1. Ephraim. Here a synonym for the northern kingdom of Israel.

Feedeth on wind. Instead of seeking the Lord as the source of safety, Israel resorted to foreign alliances to assist in holding up its waning power. "Wind" is used figuratively to indicate what is empty and vain, of no real or practical value. Therefore, to feed on wind is to take pleasure or draw nourishment from what can supply neither.

East wind. See on Jer. 18:17. To follow after the east wind is to pursue vain hopes and plans that are impracticable. But to an even greater extent, it is the destructive power of the east wind that is alluded to, making it figuratively represent even more than something that is vain and empty. It represents that which is harmful and destructive. The east wind in Palestine, coming over large tracts of sandy waste, is parching, scorching, destructive to vegetation, oppressive to man, violent on the sea (see Ps. 48:7) and on land (see Job 27:21; Jer. 18:17). Therefore the figure of following after the east wind signifies destruction. The first part of Hosea 12:1 in the LXX reads, "But Ephraim is an evil spirit, he has chased the east wind all the day."

Increaseth lies. Some explain this as describing Israel's false worship and its harmful effects (see Amos 2:4). Others take this passage to be a reference to Ephraim's conduct toward his fellow men in violence and robbery (see Jer. 6:7; Amos 3:10). The fact is, the whole life of the northern kingdom was a lie. Its people had renounced the divine

authority. They had revolted from the dynasty of David. They had rejected the priesthood of the sons of Aaron. They worshiped the golden calves. They abjured the Lord to do homage to Baalim and Ashtaroth. They loosened the bands of morality in their social life. They sought help in times of national distress, not from the Lord, but at one period from Assyria, at another, from Egypt (see on Hosea 11:5). However, all the while they claimed to be God's people. They boasted of Jacob as their father, which explains why Jacob's life is cited (ch. 12:3, 4) as a rebuke to his descendants.

And desolation. It is meaningful that lies and desolation are coupled together here. Sins unrepented of and their punishment are always linked together by God. To multiply the one, therefore, is to multiply the other. Sin is the cause, of which punishment is the effect, an effect which, tragically enough, most men seem to overlook until it is too late (see Rom. 2:4–6).

They do make a covenant. Among other ancients also, such as the Greeks and the Romans, the slaying of animal sacrifices ratified the binding provisions of an agreement by the parties concerned. This urge for foreign alliances is given as a positive proof of Israel's apostasy. Israel's payment of large gifts to Assyria, instead of holding the Assyrians off from invading their land, only stimulated the Assyrians to invade the land of Israel for further wealth (see Eccl. 5:10). The political, economic, and territorial ambitions of imperial powers such as Assyria are never satisfied. Having once begun to pay tribute to this Mesopotamian power, Israel could not stop the irresistible demand of that empire for more and more. Thus Israel's ruin was accomplished.

Oil. Usually referring to olive oil, an abundant product of Palestine (see Deut. 8:7, 8; Eze. 27:17). This oil was probably sent to Egypt as a gift to win over that country's interest and assistance against Assyria.

2. Controversy. See on ch. 4:1. Here Judah is included in God's complaint against His people. Judah's transgression was not so serious as that of Israel at this time, for that nation was still outwardly loyal to the Lord (ch. 11:12), and was not so openly guilty of apostasy as was Israel. Notwithstanding, Judah must face punishment.

Jacob. In a particular sense Jacob here denotes the northern kingdom in contrast to Judah; but in a larger, more general sense, the name covers both the ten tribes making up Israel, and the two tribes making up Judah.

3. By the heel. The mention of the name Jacob (v. 2) leads to a reference in v. 3 to two prominent events in the life of the patriarch. Evidently the object of Hosea is to admonish his people to imitate the conduct of their progenitor, and to remind them of the distinction he had obtained thereby, as an encouragement to them to go and do likewise. At his birth Jacob laid hold of his elder brother's heel, an incident that led to his receiving the name Jacob (see on Gen. 25:26). The second clause of v. 3 tells how Jacob, in the maturity of his manhood, wrestled with God, the Angel of the covenant (see Gen. 32:22–32), and prevailed, so that his name was changed from Jacob to Israel. The word "Israel" really means "he fights with God," or "he prevails over God," or "he rules with God" (see on Gen. 32:28). Jacob began that night with struggle but ended it in supplication. The end of all wrestling with God is not to conquer Him but to conquer self. The acknowledgment of weakness is our power, and those who come with the supplication, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," discover that it gives to them power with God.

4. Power. The experience of Jacob as an example for God's people to follow is more fully described and dealt with in this verse in order to stimulate the Israel of Hosea's day

to imitate it. This experience brings out certain important lessons: (1) The efficacy of earnest and persistent prayer in this struggle (see Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:17). Jacob did not give way before the dangers that threatened him, nor succumb under the difficulties of his position. He bravely faced the discouragements that surrounded him, not, however, in his own strength. By the strength God gave, he had power with God; in the vigor of this strength he wrestled with the Angel of the covenant, and prevailed. The wrestling symbolized the intense earnestness and energy he put forth; the object of this wrestling was the blessing of God. The means employed were the prayers and tears and fervent supplications. The persistence with which he prayed and pleaded is expressed in the words, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." (2) Only through God's help can we overcome the problem of evil in our lives. The touch that crippled Jacob's thigh and took away his strength revealed for all time human inability to prevail in the conflict with sin, and assuredly demonstrated what *God* can do if we will place ourselves in His hands (see Matt. 1:21; John 15:5; Phil. 4:13; Heb. 13:20, 21).

Beth-nel. Bethel was the scene of two memorable occasions in the spiritual experience of Jacob (see Gen. 28:11–22; 35:1–5). On both occasions the patriarch had there consecrated himself to God. Now Hosea appeals to Jacob's descendants to purge their lives of all idolatry, and to cease making Bethel a center of false worship (see on Hosea 4:15).

Spake with us. See on v. 5.

5. Even. The first half of v. 5 is a phrase in apposition with the pronoun "he" in the closing clause of v. 4. Thus the thought of the passage is: "And there He, even the Lord God of hosts, spake with us" ("with him" according to some MSS of the LXX and the Syriac). Some have interpreted this passage to mean that when God told Jacob that his name would no more be Jacob but Israel, He spoke not only to the patriarch but through him, representatively, to all his descendants. This interpretation would explain why Hosea tells his people that in Bethel the Lord "spake with *us*" (v. 4).

Lord God of hosts. See on Jer. 7:3. The covenant and the promise were confirmed to Israel by Him who has the power and the authority to do so, the Lord God of hosts, the Lord God of the armies of heaven, the One who guides and controls all events, and who rules the whole universe (see Ps. 103:19). The word "hosts" is specially appropriate in relation to Jacob, because of the angel hosts that met him before he wrestled with God (see on Gen. 32:2).

Memorial. That is, God's "memorial name," the name by which Israel was to remember Him (see Ex. 3:15; Ps. 135:13). To encourage the Lord's people to have full confidence in God and His power to save, the prophet adds the clause, "the Lord is his memorial." When a person's name is mentioned, immediately memory recalls what kind of character he has, whether he is good or bad, whether he is to be trusted or despised. So it is with God; His name recalls to our mind His character, His attributes, His dealings with the children of men. God is here challenging His people to consider that His name is a precious memory to them of what He is to them and what He has done for them; that His name is freighted with the recollections of past blessings and so ought to be an assurance to His people that His ways are best. The unchangeableness of God, who not only accepted Jacob but blessed and prospered him, is held out to the patriarch's descendants as a guarantee of like blessings in case they turn to the Lord and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Because Bethel has just been mentioned (v. 4), it may be that

this use of the term "memorial" is an allusion to one of the pillars Jacob set up at that place (see Gen. 28:18, 19; 35:9–15).

6. Turn thou. Because of God's inherently righteous character and His faithful attitude toward Jacob and his descendants, this is a call to repentance and trust. The proof of sincerity in heeding this appeal is to be demonstrated, first toward their fellows, by keeping "mercy and judgment"; second, toward God, by waiting on Him continually. The literal rendering of the Hebrew of this first clause makes it most expressive: "And *thou* [emphatic] in thy God shall return." This brings out the fundamental fact that in our weak and helpless condition, only by God's help can we develop the characters we ought to possess (see John 15:4, 5). We may have the will to return to God, and that is good; but it is not good enough unless our will yokes up with the will and power of God to make our purpose effective (see Rom. 7:18–20; Phil. 2:12, 13; Heb. 13:20, 21). These words, "Turn thou to thy God," are the grand and sublime call of the gospel for all men in all times (see Acts 2:37, 38; 3:19; 5:31; 17:30).

Mercy. Heb. *chesed* (see Additional Note on Psalm 36). This appeal for brotherly love and equity was one of the points the prophets emphasized (see Jer. 22:3; Micah 6:8).

Wait. If Israel would do this, they would rest in security and not be afraid of their enemies (see Isa. 30:15; 32:17). We must wait on God because of our need of Him amid the dangers that surround us, for in Him is the only source of strength and sufficiency. Waiting on God, then, denotes waiting on Him in expectation and hope, trusting in Him for help, looking to Him for deliverance (see Ps. 27:14; 40:1–3).

7. Merchant. In vs. 7–11 we have a further description of the apostasy of the northern kingdom, suggested by the first part of this chapter. Israel's apostasy presents a strong contrast to Jacob's earnestness to obtain the divine blessing, the sincerity of his repentance, the evidences of his conversion, and his constant waiting on God. This sad condition of the nation apparently prompts Hosea to repeat the story of Ephraim's spiritual degeneracy.

Balances of deceit. Ephraim was not on the high spiritual plane of the patriarch, wrestling and prevailing with God, but was a materialistically-minded huckster and exploiter, given to fraud and oppression. Instead of the mercy and justice that God required, the Israelites had descended into greedy, dishonest, oppressive trafficking, using the "balances of deceit" (see Lev. 19:36; Deut. 25:13–16).

8. Yet. Heb. *'ak*, "only," "surely," "truly" (see on Ps. 62:1). This may be taken to be a defensive reply to the divine appeal, implying, "I have only become rich; I have done nothing wrong; therefore, no iniquity can be found in me." Or this may be considered to be a self-sufficient reply to the prophet's earnest appeal to wait on God (Hosea 12:6), implying, "Certainly, I have become rich through my own efforts and not through divine help."

Become rich. Ephraim here boasts of his riches, in spite of the fact that they were procured by fraud and violence, maintaining at the same time that he has not transgressed thereby, and so does not deserve condemnation and punishment. The prosperous state of the northern kingdom during the reigns of Jehoash and Jeroboam II (see 2 Kings 14:11–16, 23–28) may have caused Israel's under self-confidence and strange forgetfulness of God, blinding them to the knowledge of their real spiritual condition (see on Hosea 2:8). Prosperity is poor food for the soul, and a constant danger to the attainment of eternal life.

None iniquity. This protestation of innocence on the part of Ephraim foreshadowed the Pharisaical attitude of the Jews of Christ's day, who stoutly justified themselves before men but were known to be hypocrites by God (see Luke 16:13–15; 18:9–14).

9. And I. This verse consists grammatically of two separate clauses that are independent statements. The first clause reads: "And I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt."

Make thee to dwell. The following interpretations of this second clause have been suggested: (1) That it forms a divine warning, that as the Jews were once in bondage in Egypt, so again the Lord will put them in a land of bondage, Assyria. (2) That this is a promise, that as God brought His people out of Egypt and had them dwell in tents in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land, so will He do again. There may be a threat here that God will drive His people out of their pleasant land and put them in a wilderness state because of their pride and ingratitude. However, notwithstanding threatened punishment, there is extended to Israel the promise and prospect of the Lord's guiding care and wonderful guardianship, as in the early history of Israel, the memory of which was still kept alive by the Feast of Tabernacles. During the seven days of this feast the people dwelt in booths in commemoration of their having dwelt in tents in the wilderness after they had been delivered from Egypt (see Lev. 23:33–36, 39–43). Not only was the Feast of Tabernacles an occasion of yearly thanksgiving for the blessings with which God had crowned the year, but its booths symbolized that we have here "no continuing city" (see Heb. 11:9, 10; 13:14).

10. Visions. Heb. *chazon* (see on 1 Sam. 3:1).

Similitudes. These are comparisons likenesses, parables, symbols, which show the invisible by the visible. Frequently prophets used similitudes to convey the divine meaning to the people, employing such figures as the vineyard (Isa. 5), the image (Dan. 2), the beasts (Dan. 7), the tile and the iron pan (Eze. 4). The LXX for this clause significantly reads, "And by the means of the prophets I was represented." Similitudes made the prophets' messages more arresting, easier to understand, and easier to remember. God is here honoring His true prophets by showing that it is only through them that He reveals His will (see Amos 3:7).

11. Iniquity. Hosea asks the question only to answer it decisively. "Is there iniquity in Gilead?" "Indeed there is, and nothing else."

Gilead. Some understand that Gilead and Gilgal here represent the two parts of the northern kingdom; Gilead the eastern part, Gilgal the western part. The prophet had previously referred to the grave wickedness of the inhabitants of Gilead (see on ch. 6:8).

Surely. Heb. *'ak* (see on Ps. 62:1; Hosea 12:8).

Vanity. Iniquity will lead any people into vanity and worthlessness. As one of the penalties, sin results in moral and physical degeneracy that terminates in eternal death.

Gilgal. See on ch. 4:15. The inhabitants of Gilgal on the west were on better than those of Gilead on the east of Jordan, which proves that the whole kingdom was given over to the worship of idols (see Amos 4:4; 5:5).

Heaps. Heb. *gallim*, "heaps of stones," such as farmers collected on plowed ground and left in useless heaps for easy removal. The idolatrous altars of both Gilead (meaning, "heap of witness"; see on Gen. 31:47) and Gilgal are to be turned into stone heaps. This treatment of the altars implied not only their destruction but the desolation of the country.

The very abundance of these altar ruins in the furrows of the field presents a conspicuous and prominent picture of the gross idolatry of the people.

12. Jacob fled. Jacob's flight to, and servitude for, Laban (v. 12) are compared to Israel's experience in Egypt (v. 13). Some hold that vs. 12, 13 set forth the double servitude of Israel: the first, that which their forefather Jacob endured; the second, that which the twelve tribes suffered in Egypt. It may also be that the distress and affliction of Jacob are presented as a contrast with the exaltation of his posterity, the object of this contrast being to impress God's people with His goodness to them in rescuing them from their bondage and to inspire them with gratitude to God and with grateful yet humble acknowledgment of His mercy.

13. Prophet. Moses is the prophet here alluded to (see Ex. 3:4–12; Ps. 77:20; Isa. 63:11–14). Just as Israel of old was preserved by the prophet Moses, so will God's people today be preserved by giving heed to the appointed messengers of God and ordering their lives in harmony with the counsel thus imparted (see 2 Peter 1:9).

14. Anger. Because of Ephraim's falseness and lack of devotion, he provoked the Lord to bitter anger. Ephraim's guilt and punishment would not be removed. See on Judges 2:20; 2 Kings 13:3.

Blood. Ephraim had shed blood profusely (see chs. 4:2; 5:2).

Reproach. The dishonor that Ephraim offered to God through idolatry and iniquity shall return unto him. Those who rebel against God and bring reproach upon His name must expect divine retribution (see 1 Sam. 2:30).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PK 280
4 Ed 147; GC 617; PP 197
4, 5 SR 96
5 DA 579
6 PK 282
7 4T 310

CHAPTER 13

1 *Ephraim's glory, by reason of idolatry, vanisheth*. 5 *God's anger for their unkindness*. 9 *A promise of God's mercy*. 15 *A judgment for rebellion*.

1. Trembling. Verses 1–8 of this chapter show why Ephraim (the northern kingdom of Israel) has "destroyed" himself (v. 9). The particulars of the nation's sins are given, with the punishment incurred as a result of these transgressions.

Offended. This evidently refers to the worship of Baal (for which undoubtedly the calf worship had prepared the way), which had been introduced into Israel by Ahab at the instigation of Queen Jezebel (see 1 Kings 16:29–33). Through the efforts of Elijah (1 Kings 18) and King Jehu (2 Kings 9; 10) this evil received a setback, but it was not eradicated, and frequently broke out again.

He died. Ephraim's idolatry resulted in national degradation and political death. He lost his high and exalted position, and his honor was laid in the dust. He became spiritually dead, ready for the burial soon to come (see Eph. 2:1). Deserting God and dallying with sin always brings one sure result, death (see Eze. 33:10, 11; Rom. 6:23). In contrasting Ephraim's prosperity and his destruction, the prophet shows that Ephraim owed his prosperity to the undeserved mercy of God, who blessed him for Joseph's sake (see Gen. 49:22); his destruction he owed to his own sin.

2. And now. These words meaningfully mark the transition from the time of the introduction of Baal worship (see on v. 1) to the conditions of Hosea's day. It was a heinous thing to make and worship a graven image as a material representation of the true God, as did Jeroboam I (see 1 Kings 12:25–33), thus violating the second commandment and neglecting the solemn instruction that the worship of God must be *spiritual,* not material (see Ex. 20:4–6; John 4:24). But it was doubly heinous to introduce other gods, such as the Phoenician Baal, in direct violation of the first commandment, which requires the exclusive worship of the Lord (see Ex. 20:3). And now, in Hosea's day, all forms of idolatry had continued "more and more," until the nation was fairly saturated with these false religions.

Work of the craftsmen. Being the work of men's hands, these images and idols had no spiritual or physical power (see Isa. 44:9–20; Hab. 2:18, 19).

Kiss the calves. It was the custom of idol worshipers to kiss the object of their worship (see 1 Kings 19:18). If the image could not be approached (as the moon), the kiss was sent to it by the worshiper's kissing his own hand (see on Job 31:27).

3. Morning cloud. Ephraim's prosperity is to be short-lived (see Ps. 37:35, 36); his apostasy will bring upon him sure and swift punishment. These four figures, the morning cloud, the early dew, the chaff, and the smoke, very expressively denote the transient nature of Israel's national existence. The Bible abounds in figures representing the transitoriness of human life (see Isa. 40:6–8; James 4:14; etc.).

4. Land of Egypt. Verses 4, 5 show that the divine punishment upon Ephraim cannot reasonably be accounted too severe in view of God's goodness to ungrateful Israel. From the time His people were in Egypt, the Lord gave them His favor, which they shamelessly forgot. The prophets were in the habit of referring to the past history of God's saving grace in dealing with His people, as the basis of an appeal to repentance for present sin and as an encouragement to seek divine approval and acceptance.

No saviour. Hosea here refers to God as the only true God, all other gods being frauds (see Isa. 43:10–12; Isa. 45:20, 21). The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was a mighty evidence of God's power.

5. In the wilderness. Since God knew His people and cared for them, they should have retained a knowledge of Him (see on ch. 4:6) by preserving His worship (see Deut. 32:9–14).

6. Were they filled. On God's rich pasture of love and goodness His people waxed full. Ephraim is like a domestic work animal (see on ch. 10:11) which, in a too-luxuriant pasture, becomes headstrong and unmanageable.

Forgotten me. Instead of remembering God gratefully and shaping their lives in accordance with His abundant favor toward them, the people were filled with pride and forgot their Maker. The more this world's goods are sought and prized, the more is God, the great Giver of all good, forgotten. This was the aggravation of Israel's sin that the prophet so often called to the nation's attention (see chs. 2:5; 4:7; 10:1).

7. As a lion. A figure that fittingly depicts the destruction that inescapably follows Israel's sin. The ravenous beasts mentioned here, the lion with its ferocity and the leopard with its fleetness, symbolize the soon-coming invasion of the Assyrians that will bring to an end the northern kingdom (see 2 Kings 17:1–6). The fatted sheep in their luxuriant pasture (Hosea 13:6) will soon become the prey of the devourers.

8. As a bear. Few animals are fiercer than the she-bear is, when she is robbed of her cubs or when she is very hungry. The LXX for the opening clause reads, "I will meet them by the way of the Assyrians, as a she-bear excited." The three wild beasts mentioned, the lion, the leopard, and the bear, aptly display the power of God's wrath and the fury of His anger. If the sinner escaped from the lion, the leopard overtook him; if he escaped from the leopard the savage she-bear met him. It seems that Hosea is endeavoring to bring to his people with cumulative force a realization of what the visitation of divine wrath means. The prophet here employs the same terrifying figures from the animal world that are often elsewhere used to symbolize the nations that Satan employs to oppose and devour God's people (see Jer. 4:7; 50:17, 44; Eze 32:2; Dan. 7:4–7).

Caul of their heart. Literally, "the enclosure of their heart"; that is, the pericardium, the membrane that surrounds the heart. Israel had closed their heart against God. The divine punishment is pictured as the rending of this closed heart by a lion. The prophet presents a graphic and impressive parallel to the day of judgment, when all hearts will be laid open before God (see Heb. 4:13; 10:30, 31).

9. Destroyed thyself. Israel destroyed themselves with the weapons of pride, idolatry, sensuality, and anarchy. Sin is ever suicidal (Prov. 8:36; Eze. 18:20; 33:10, 11; 5T 120).

Thine help. Israel's extremity may be to them, if they will, God's opportunity (see Isa. 49:14–16; Heb. 13:5). The verse is at once a tragic end and a comforting beginning, an assurance that while Israel's ruin was caused by their own course of action, there is open still to them an opportunity to return to the Lord. While throughout the whole course of human history wrath and ruin are the just desert of sinful man, goodness and mercy are the dispensation of a righteous, loving God.

10. Thy king. The questions in this verse show clearly that the kings of Israel's own choice (see on ch. 8:4) could not give help to the nation. The reason the Israelites gave for requesting a king was that he might judge them and go out before them to fight their battles (1 Sam 8:19, 20). Their fear of what hostile nations might do to them presented a crisis which they felt only a king could adequately meet. In the crisis now before them—the threat of Assyrian invasion—the Lord asks, "Where is now the king that will lead them to the defense of all their cities and their fortresses, and give them victory? Where are the judges and the princes who will act as deliverers from danger?" The answers is, of course, that such powerful helpers are not to be found.

If we confine the import of the words "thy king" to the northern kingdom, the reference here is to Israel's choice of Jeroboam I, in order to rid themselves of the pressure of Rehoboam's taxes (1 Kings 12:12–20). However, the use of the term "judges" and the wording of the people's request suggest that this passage refers to Israel's mistake in demanding a king in the first place (see 1 Sam 8:5) rather than to the northern kingdom's rejection of Rehoboam and its selection of Jeroboam.

11. Gave thee a king. This king is undoubtedly Saul (see 1 Sam 8:4–7; 9:22 to 10:1). Augustine is reported to have stated, "God many times in giving is angry, and in denying is merciful" (see Num. 11; Ps. 78:18, 27–31, 38, 39; 106:14, 15, 43–46). It is a sobering thought that God may punish men by granting them their wish.

12. Bound up. As a man, according to custom, wraps up money in a bag and deposits it in some secret place in order that it might be preserved, so God had carefully kept Ephraim's sins (see Deut. 32:34, 35; Job 14:17). Now Ephraim's day of reckoning has

come. Paul employs the same illustration regarding the fate of the sinner (Rom 2:4–6). Instead of hiding our sins we should bring them out into the full light of repentance and confession if we would be pardoned (see Job 31:33).

13. Sorrows. The punishment of which, God warns, is compared to the violent, sudden, irresistible throes of a travailing woman (see 1 Thess. 5:3). Israel's iniquity will be followed by severe sufferings and many sorrows. However, these worldly sorrows may, under divine grace, result in the godly sorrows of repentance. Then, and not till then, will a new and happier period of existence be ushered in.

14. I will ransom. Commentators are divided as to the application of this passage. Taken by itself it appears to be a beautiful promise of the resurrection and of the ultimate annihilation of death and *she'ol*. However, such an interpretation does not seem appropriate to the context. Verses 12, 13 speak of the inevitability of judgment at hand. Verse 15 continues the subject. Furthermore, the statement, "Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes," does not appear to accord naturally with the preceding statements; even less so when it is observed that the word translated "repentance" is probably more correctly rendered "compassion." This consideration has led many expositors to search for a meaning that will accord fully with the context. They point out that by translating the passage as a series of questions instead of a series of positive assertions, complete harmony is achieved. The following translation is based on these considerations: "Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your destruction? Compassion is hid from my eyes" (RSV). Viewed in this way the passage warns that because "the iniquity of Ephraim is bound up," God will not rescue the people from death; that He is, in fact, calling upon death and *she'ol* to do their work; and that compassion will be absent from Him while He does what is for Him a "strange work" (Isa. 28:21).

Those who hold that this passage is a promise of the resurrection point out that the words may be a sudden outburst by the prophet in view of the glorious future prospect, and therefore appears to be detached from the context. They interpret the passage, "Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes," as asserting that God's merciful purposes for His people will not be changed.

Paul's triumphant outburst in 1 Cor. 15:55, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" is perhaps an allusion to Hosea 13:14. The apostle's words are more like the LXX than like the Hebrew. The corresponding clauses in the LXX read, "Where is thy punishment, O death? Where is thy sting, O Hades?"

15. Fruitful. There is probably a play on words, the name Ephraim, by common derivation, being derived from a root meaning "to be fruitful" (see Gen. 49:22). The name Ephraim is commonly used in the OT as a designation for the northern part of the divided kingdom, because of the fact that Ephraim was the largest and most influential tribe in the north. In a similar way, the southern kingdom was commonly known as Judah, the most numerous and influential tribe in the south.

East wind. East winds in Palestine, coming from the desert, tended to be hot and scorching (see on Jer. 18:17). The mighty armies of Assyria are represented by this figure.

He shall spoil. Or, "it shall spoil," that is, the east wind, although there is a sudden transition from the figure to the actual. It is the Assyrian conqueror who, coming from the East like a devastating east wind, would ravage and spoil Israel.

16. Samaria. The city of Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom.

Become desolate. Heb. *asham*, "be held guilty." The translation "become desolate" requires a change of the Hebrew word. The LXX reads, "shall be made to disappear," or "shall be destroyed." In the Hebrew Bible v. 16 begins ch. 14.

Dashed in pieces. On the barbarous customs of ancient warfare see on Judges 1:6; 2 Kings 8:12; cf. 2 Chron. 25:12.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 5T 50
3 PK 260; 8T 11
4 4T 139
9 DA 583, 588; GC 35
9, 10 PK 283
11 PP 605
14 PK 240

CHAPTER 14

1 *An exhortation to repentance*. 4 *A promise of God's blessing*.

1. Return. Chapter 14 is a fitting climax to the message of Hosea. The prophet makes one last appeal to his people to forsake their iniquity and turn to the Lord. It was not yet too late. But the day of opportunity was fast slipping away. The war clouds were darkening on the eastern horizon. Assyria was at the zenith of its power and its imperialistic ambitions were soon to engulf the idol-mad, vice-intoxicated nation of Israel. Inasmuch as the prophetic ministry of Hosea extended to the reign of Hezekiah (ch. 1:1) and the fall of Samaria came in the 6th year of that king's reign (2 Kings 18:9, 10), it is possible that this final message was delivered shortly before the final day of doom. Since the individual messages of the book are not dated, it is impossible to fix precisely the exact dates of the various messages.

Thou hast fallen. Literally, "thou hast stumbled."

2. Take with you. Probably an allusion to the requirement of the Mosaic law that "none shall appear before me empty" (Ex. 23:15). The people might have expected that as an accompaniment of their return the Lord would require animal sacrifices or material gifts. But the prophet calls for neither of these. A simple plea for mercy accompanied by heartfelt repentance and confession is all that the Lord requires (see on Ps. 32:1).

All iniquity. Sin thoroughly repented of can be freely forgiven. Once forgiven it is no longer reckoned to the sinner's account (see on Ps. 32:2).

Receive us graciously. Literally, "receive thou good," probably a petition for God to accept as "good" the confession of the penitent.

Calves. Heb. *parim*, "young bulls." The dropping of one consonant gives the reading "fruit." This reading has the support of the LXX and the Syriac and fits well into the context. If *parim* is retained, the meaning seems to be that as sacrificial bulls the people offer their lips. There is a possible allusion to Hosea 14:2 in Heb. 13:15 in the phrase "the fruit of our lips." However, the phrase shows agreement with the LXX rather than with the Hebrew.

3. Asshur. That is, Assyria. The people make a pledge with regard to three of their outstanding sins. On expecting help from Assyria see chs. 5:13; 7:11. On trusting in the

horses and chariots of Egypt see Hosea 7:11; cf. Isa. 31:1. On the sin of idolatry see Hosea 13:2; cf. Isa. 42:17.

4. I will heal. God responds to the penitential prayer. Backsliding is here regarded as a disease. Only the divine Physician can heal the maladies of the soul (see Jer. 8:22; Matt. 9:12).

Backsliding. Heb. *meshubah*, from the root *shub*, "to turn," "to turn back," hence, "backturning."

Love them freely. When sins are forgiven and the righteousness of Christ covers the sinner, then, sinful though he may have been, he is accepted before God as if he had never sinned. His past record of sins is in no wise held against him, and God loves him as He loves His own Son (see SC 67).

5. As the dew. In lands where there is little rain, the dew helps to refresh the needy plants. Thus the dew becomes a symbol of fruitfulness and the absence of dew a symbol of drought and devastation. So God would become the source of Israel's spiritual fruitfulness. As the dew comes night after night, so God day by day supplies grace sufficient for the day.

Grow as the lily. A figure suggesting such qualities as beauty, purity, perfume, and rapidity of growth (see Matt. 6:28, 29).

His roots. The roots of the lily are weak, and hence not a suitable figure of Ephraim's promised stability.

As Lebanon. Either the cedars of Lebanon or the mountains of Lebanon. By a change of the Hebrew, reading *libneh* instead of *lebanon*, the RSV reads, "as a poplar."

6. Branches. Heb. *yoneqoth*, "shoots."

As the olive tree. Compare Jer. 11:16. The olive has been called the crown of the fruit trees of Palestine. It was especially valuable. Its oil was used as food and provided light. Its fruitage, so plentiful and useful, its green, so splendid, and its foliage, so enduringly fresh, provided a vivid picture of Ephraim's glorious prospect.

7. His shadow. If Jehovah is still the speaker, this should read "my shadow" (see RSV), although such a translation involves a slight change of the Hebrew. On the other hand the prophet may here be speaking, in which case the change in person in accounted for.

Shall return. Ephraim might have realized the glorious prospect here portrayed. Through Hosea the Lord endeavored to make the outlook appear as appealing as possible in the hope that the invitation might not be refused. The appeal constitutes a fitting climax to the book.

As the corn. The clause reads literally, "they shall revive the grain." The RSV translation, "they shall flourish as a garden," is obtained by a slight change in the Hebrew word for "corn." The LXX reads, "they shall be filled with grain."

8. Shall say. These words are supplied. The Hebrew of the first sentence may be translated, "O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols?" (RSV).

I have heard. The verb may be regarded as expressing repetitive action as might be expressed in the clause, "I am the one who hears." The LXX has a different reading in this and the following clause, "I have afflicted him and I will strengthen him."

Fir tree. Heb. *berosh*, probably the cypress. Some identify *berosh* with the Phoenician juniper.

9. Who is wise. Hosea closes his prophecy with the plea that his people give earnest attention to all the words the Lord has spoken through him. For a definition of true wisdom see on Prov. 1:2.

Shall walk in them. The issue was thus clearly placed before the Israelites. Two courses lay before them. They could either continue in their wicked ways and reap the inevitable results or they could turn wholeheartedly to God and obtain salvation. The Lord's ways, being upright and unchangeable, will be accomplished despite what men might do (Mal. 3:6; James 1:17). If they are lost the blame will rest with them, for God has confronted them with every inducement to follow the way of right (Deut. 30:15–20).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 GC 35
1, 2 PK 282
1–3 8T 277
1–8 COL 218
2 2T 234
4 MYP 70; PK 84; 1T 143, 431, 656; 2T 303; 5T 104, 177; 8T 219
4–9 PK 284; 8T 277
5 1T 31; SC 68
5, 7 COL 67; Ed 106; SC 67
3

[3]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Ho 9:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.